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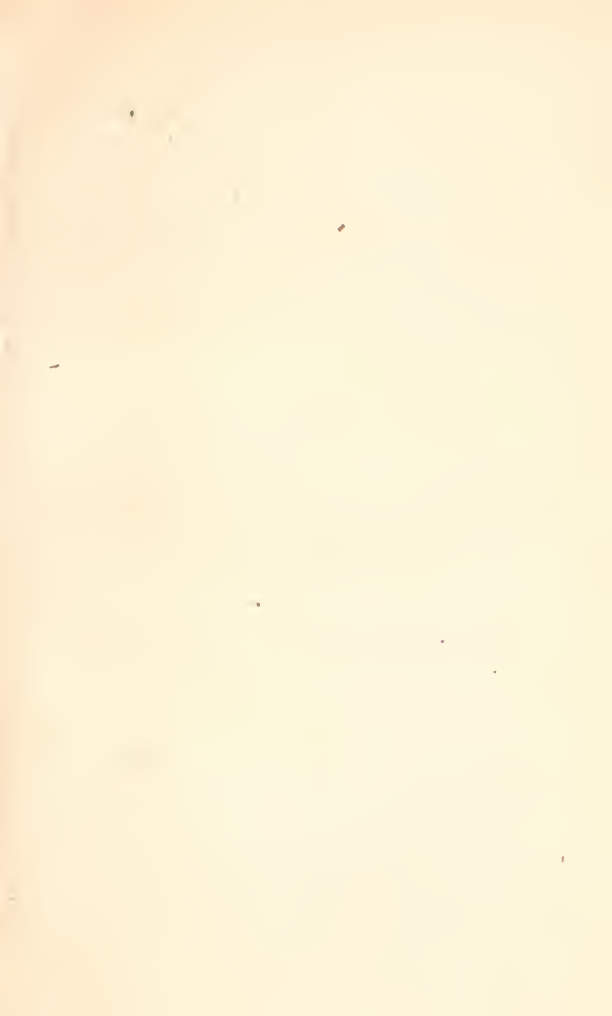
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HISTORY
OF THE
FRENCH REVOLUTION,
ITS
CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES.

BY
F. MACLEAN ROWAN.

"Ils veulent être libres et ils ne savent pas être justes."—SIEYÈS.

VOL. I.

NEW-YORK:
D. APPLETON & COMPANY,
346 & 348 BROADWAY.

M. DCCC. LIV.



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PREFACE.

IN the little work here presented to the public, the faults of the people are more insisted upon than those of the rulers, because it is written for the former, not for the latter ; and because, if the latter have a lesson to learn from history, the former have a still greater one, and one that, if well learned by them, will suffice for both. Despotism and tyranny are almost impossible evils in our day, but the love of liberty is so great, that the important task now is to enlighten and to regulate that love, so that, in their headlong career for the attainment of a good, the people place not themselves in the way of the very evils they seek to avoid. They have to learn, that for nations as for individuals, happiness depends upon virtue and wisdom, and that therefore liberty, which is happiness, does not mean merely freedom from restraint, and cannot be attained through crimes.

There is not perhaps in history a more striking

example of how incompatible liberty is with corruption, than that period of the French Revolution, the Reign of Terror, when every citizen* in the state, without exception, had the right of voting, and was thus considered represented, and when the representatives of the people presented the most hideous assembly of vicious tyrants and despots which the world has ever witnessed.

* This word is here used in its usual acceptation, though nothing can be farther from the proper idea of the duties of citizenship, than the notions and practice of the French of that day.

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HISTORY

OF

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.

CHAPTER I.

Introductory Sketch of the early History of France—Louis XIV.

EVERY one who has taken a view of the French Revolution of 1789, must have felt that deeds such as those it gave rise to, and national phrensy such as it gave evidence of, could only be the consequences of centuries of corruption; and every writer on these events has, therefore, sought in history to trace the causes that could produce such lamentable results.

Strange that though all have gone back to search for the origin of evil, none (or at least very few) have done so to search for that good, the departure from which must be the origin of evil, and the remnants of which must have been the principle of vitality, which prevented entire destruction. When societies are first formed by a number of individuals, renouncing some of their natural and individual rights in order the more securely to enjoy the rest, all men are in the same condition, and the regulations they enter into are consequently such as shall ensure the same benefits to all.* But the very means for doing this, become the means for the few to benefit themselves at the expense of the many, and the

* I do not mean to say that this is done deliberately and with full consciousness, but it is the result of existing circumstances, and probably also of those instincts of order and justice, of which man received the stamp upon his soul, when he was made in the image of God.

liberty of the people, therefore, at later periods becomes dependent upon the degree of the primitive feeling of individual rights, harmonized with the good of all, which is still extant among them. The existence of this feeling must again be dependent upon the extent to which the institutions which were originally planned for the maintenance of liberty are kept up.* But in our times it has been forgotten that liberty can only exist where a nation understands its own affairs, and that where this is the case, revolution is out of the question.

Since the French Revolution spread its pernicious doctrines in the world, the idea of liberty has, in almost all minds, been connected with change, and novelty, and revolution has become, as it were, the necessary and only means for the attainment of liberty. Simplicity and stability have not been thought of, as having the least connection with liberty; therefore has there been no searching for it in the ancient institutions of the nations, but in the theories and speculations of philosophers; as if freedom were an abstract idea, and not a state of being.

Some writers have sought for the causes of the French Revolution in the character of the people, which, according to them, has, throughout its history, evinced itself in the same way; that is, whenever the people of France has had any share of power, either legally or illegally obtained, the result has been anarchy and bloodshed. But this seems a very arbitrary and superficial way of deciding the matter, for though it must be admitted that races, as individuals, have inherent qualities and tenden-

* There has never been a free nation which has not had in its natural constitution germs of liberty as ancient as itself; and nations have never efficaciously attempted to develop, by their fundamental written laws, other rights than those that existed in their natural constitution.—DE MAISTRE.

gies, still these qualities and tendencies can be modified and even destroyed by outward circumstances, and others be planted in their place. When races divide into nations, these nations, though springing from the same source, then develop a different individuality, and it is probable that the minds of the founders and the first lawgivers of nations give their own individual stamp to the people. Certain it is, that the histories of France and England, two nations sprung from the same source, present a remarkable contrast. While in England the Teutonic race goes on for centuries, developing its admirable institutions according to the exigencies of the times, in France these institutions are deteriorated by intermixture with foreign alloy, and the spirit of the race changes. The struggles through which every nation has to pass in the progress of its development, in England, under all their various forms, have always exhibited a decided tendency towards liberty, that is, towards the establishing and guarantying of the rights of all classes of the community; while in France these struggles have always been for power, for immunity from the burdens of the state, not for equal partition of them.

First, we have the immediate descendants of Clovis contending for universal power; then the mayors of the palace usurping the place of their masters, and aiming at even more extensive power and dominion. During this time the history of France presents a frightful picture of crimes, treason, invasions, and wars. But still a kind of superstitious reverence seemed attached to the person of the sovereign; a remnant, perhaps, of the spirit of those simple ages when men revered in their governors the representatives of their own unity, and the sanctity of their laws. However debased in power, the sovereign was allowed to retain his station, and

when Pepin became ambitious of joining the dignity of monarch to the reality of power which he had long possessed, he was obliged to sanctify the deed by the approbation of the Pope, and the whole people.

His son, Charlemagne, found himself master of one of the greatest empires of the world. This great monarch, one of those master-minds that seem to suffice for all things, and in whom were combined the conqueror and the legislator, that is, the destroyer and the builder, laid no sound foundation however to his edifice ; he commenced that system of centralization, to which may, perhaps, be attributed the political incapacity of the *people* of France, who, losing by degrees even the traditions of that self-government which they had enjoyed in more barbarous ages, when they attained power knew not how to use it for the attainment of liberty ; for though power in a monarch may destroy the liberty of the people, power (or rather, freedom from restraint) regained by that people, is not sufficient to re-establish liberty.

When under the feeble successors of Charlemagne the power of the sovereign again declined, it was not the people, but the subordinate lords of the state, who caught it as it fell from their hands ; and while in England the feudal system introduced by the conquering nation, was by a powerful sovereign at once grafted on, and made to harmonize with the free institutions of his new subjects, in France it arose out of the weakness of the monarch, and became as it were the establishing of anarchy as a permanent system. Every petty lord became the sovereign despot in his own dominions. The difference between the king and his vassals was in dignity rather than in actual power.

From this time even the form of national assemblies, (which, a remnant of the ancient liberty of the Teutonic

race, had been kept up until about seventy years after Charlemagne) entirely disappeared, and the royal council then became composed only of barons, tenants in chief, prelates, and household officers. The great vassals of the crown acted for themselves in their own dominions, assisted by similar councils, and the kings had not the power of enforcing laws in the domains of their vassals. Whenever they were desirous of making a general regulation they were obliged to enter into an agreement with their vassals for the purpose.

Every kind of misfortune, says a French historian, fell at once upon France. The throne and the altar, laws and truth, duties and religion, were all swallowed up in the gulf of anarchy. Individual interests struggling violently with the general interest, produced a monstrous mixture of the ruins of the ancient government and ancient discipline. The bishops, following the example of the temporal lords, shook off the yoke of obedience, and having made themselves dukes and counts, were engrossed by their ambitious plans, and the necessity of defending themselves by arms: considering their flocks, not as souls for which they were to answer before God, but as slaves upon whom they could trample as despots.

The degenerate descendants of Pepin and Charlemagne were in their turn succeeded by one of their vassals, Hugh Capet; who, by uniting to the crown domains several considerable fiefs, as well as by his personal qualities, again restored some of the ancient power of the crown: and thenceforward the sovereigns, having regained a position, were constant in endeavors to extend their own power, and to curb that of their vassals. For this end they conferred privileges upon the towns. National assemblies, comprising the third estate,

or the Commons, were again convoked, but so often abused and wasted the power thus given to them, that these assemblies frequently ended in bloodshed and riot.

Though these, as well as other free-sounding institutions, thenceforward appear regularly in the history of France, it is the power of the crown that goes on increasing, not the liberty of the people; and whenever comparative order and prosperity bless the land, it seems rather the free gift of the sovereign than the result of the comprehension of the citizens of their rights, and of their exertions for the attainment of that which might ensure the enjoyment of them.

The earliest records we have of the parliaments of France do not reach beyond the twelfth century, in the reign of Louis VI. The parliament of Paris is generally considered the most ancient, though it is probable the other principalities had institutions of a similar kind, at a period almost as remote. This body was originally ambulatory, following the king's court wherever it went, until the reign of Philip le Bel, at the beginning of the fourteenth century, when it became fixed at Paris. Since that time it was rarely removed, and that only on some very extraordinary occasions. Thenceforward it met at regular periods, twice in the year, until, under the reign of Charles VI., at the close of the same century, it became perpetual.

The parliament was considered chiefly as a judicial court, but it had other functions, which, as the royal authority gradually encroached upon its privileges, became of scarcely any importance.*

* The most important privilege vested in the Parliament as a constitutional body, was the right to examine the laws presented to it by the king before registering them, which was one of its functions, and to protest against them in case they were not in accordance with the fundamental statutes of the realm. This right became an empty sound at a later period, when the

As the judicial business increased, it was found necessary to admit lawyers into the parliament, who thence by degrees took a higher position. From the reign of St. Louis, in the middle of the thirteenth century, they began to form a powerful class in the community, being favored by the kings, who wished by this new-created *noblesse de robe* to counterbalance the power of the *noblesse de l'épée*.

The most revolting acts of injustice under the forms of law, were, however, perpetrated in the reigns of the successors of Louis IX., (St. Louis,) and the parliament was powerless to remedy the frightful evils under which the country was suffering.

Louis XI., with a firm hand and an indomitable will, but often by base means, re-established order and power in the empire; but his system was that of absolutism, and though the great were curbed, the people did not obtain more liberty.

In the assembly of the States-General, convoked in 1484, in the reign of Charles VIII., the Commons took a prominent part, and some burst of popular feeling might then have afforded a hope that the people were becoming better acquainted with their rights. Philip Pot, the deputy from Burgundy, made a very remarkable speech, in which were the germs of a republican spirit very unusual in those days. "In the beginning," said he, "the sovereign people created kings by its suffrage. Princes are appointed not in order to enrich themselves at the expense of the people, but, forgetting their own interests, to enrich the state, and promote the public welfare I include in the term people, not merely the pop-

kings usurped the power of *forcing* the registering of their decrees in a bed of justice. Where is the human institution which can prevent a corrupt people from being enslaved?

ulace or only the subjects of the kingdom, but men of every class, even the princes.”*

These fine principles, however, were perhaps merely declamatory words for him who uttered them, as well as for those who heard them; the nation, accustomed to be governed, was incapable of governing itself, and this convocation of the States-General ended without bringing any accession of liberty to the people.

During the next reign, that of Louis XII., the laws did not oppress, but protected the people, and the king sought out the ablest and best men to fill the courts, so that justice should be administered impartially; but nothing was done towards giving the nation constitutional rights. The long series of civil and religious wars which succeeded, and extended over the whole of the sixteenth century, exhausted the country and weakened the royal authority, but nothing had been gained for the liberty of the lower classes. When the reign of Henry IV. at length restored religious peace to the country, rigorous laws and heavy taxes still oppressed the people.

Louis XIII., or rather his minister Richelieu, who reigned in his name, destroyed the power and independence of the nobility, but the state of the people continued to be miserable, the finances were exhausted, and industry and commerce neglected. The active spirit of the nation, paralyzed by suffering, seemed only to revive for factious struggles.

The words of Mazarin addressed to the deputies of the parliament of Paris during the minority of Louis XIV show what were the pretensions of the crown at that period. The parliament, the *chambre des comptes*, the *cour des aides*, and the *grand conseil*, had signed an

* Masselin, Lavallée.

arrêt d'union, which caused some anxiety to the minister, who having ordered the deputies of the parliament to appear before him, declared to them that the queen regent could not allow such *arrêts*. The magistrates answered, that there was nothing in this *arrêt* contrary to the service of the king. "If the king," replied Mazarin, "did not choose that you should wear gold lace upon your collars, it would be necessary to discontinue wearing it, for it is not so much the thing forbidden, as it is the fact that it is forbidden, which constitutes the crime."

The war of the Fronde, which was the result of this manifestation of arbitrary power, also proves that the spirit of the nobility was not yet broken, though it was on this occasion again obliged to submit to the superior power of the crown. At this time (1660) peace was established throughout Europe. The Stuarts were again restored to the throne of England, and monarchy was universally triumphant. It was a solemn epoch in the history of Europe. "Royalty, freed from its ancient shackles, became everywhere almost absolute. In France, in Spain, in the greater number of the States of the Germanic empire, it had subdued the feudal aristocracy, and ceased to protect the liberty of the commons, no longer having occasion to oppose them to other enemies. The nobility, (*la haute noblesse*,) as if it had lost the feeling of its defeat, pressed around the throne, almost proud of the renown of its conqueror. The middle classes, (*la bourgeoisie*,) scattered and of a timid spirit, while enjoying the growing order, and a welfare until then unknown, labored to enrich and enlighten themselves, but as yet without aspiring to take part in the government of the state. Everywhere the pomp of the courts, the promptitude of the administration, proclaimed the pre-

ponderance of the royal power. The belief in the divine right and supremacy of kings was prevalent, and even but feebly resisted where it was not recognised. In short, the progress of civilization, of letters, of the arts of peace and internal prosperity, embellished this triumph of pure monarchy, inspired princes with presumptuous confidence, and the people with contentment mixed with admiration.”*

The moment in which Louis XIV. took the reins of government in his own hands, was the signal of this new era in the history of Europe.

Mazarin, like Richelieu, though he achieved great things, left the finances in a deplorable condition. No sooner, however, had Louis XIV. attained his majority, than he applied himself with all the vigor of his noble but ambitious character, to the laying the surest foundations for the glory of his name. The finances were improved, commerce and manufactures encouraged, and the country rendered strong and respected without, and prosperous within. But even here the germ of evil was laid beside the germ of good, for Colbert forgot, in his zeal to place France on an equal footing with the first manufacturing countries of the world, that one class of a nation cannot with impunity be benefited at the expense of another, and the restrictions placed upon the trade in corn, as well as other protective measures, through which an undue interference of government was exercised, did not fail to produce a future harvest of evil.

Louis XIV. commenced with an ardent desire for the happiness of his people, and he was indefatigable in attending to the affairs of the nation; but he wished to grasp all power, and was unwilling to delegate it to oth-

* GUIZOT'S *Histoire de la Révolution d'Angleterre*, vol i., p. 3.

ers. His ideas upon the rights and duties of kings were absolute in the extreme.

All historians from whom we obtain records of his reign, agree in representing Louis in this light ; the following are said to be his ideas of the kingly character. "The interests of the state should be his first consideration. To command others he must raise himself above them, and neither execute, nor order any thing which may be unworthy of himself, of the position which he fills, nor of the dignity of the state. He who works for the state, works for himself ; the welfare of the one, constitutes the glory of the other. When the first is elevated, happy, and powerful, he who is the cause of its prosperity, will be glorious."*

"The king represents the whole nation, all power resides in his hands, and there can be no other in the kingdom than that which he establishes. The nation has no vital power ; in France it resides entirely in the person of the king."†

"Kings are absolute lords, and have consequently the full and entire disposal of the property of the clergy as well as the laity."‡

"He who has given kings to the world has willed that they should be respected as His lieutenants, reserving to himself the sole right of examining their conduct. It is His will that whoever is born a subject should obey blindly."§

"A king ought to decide for himself, because decision has need of a master spirit, and in cases where reason

* *Siècle de Louis XIV.*, ch. 28.

† *Manuscrit d'un Cour de Droit*, composed for the instruction of the Duke de Bourgogne, quoted by LEMONTEY, in his *Essai sur la Monarchie de Louis XIV.*, p. 15.

‡ *Mémoire de Louis XIV.*, vol. ii., p. 121.

§ *Idem*, p. 336.

does not prompt him, he must yield to the instinct which God has put in all men, especially in kings.”*

Louis XIV. did not long remain content with the glory of rendering his people happy. The mania of foreign conquest seized him, and a succession of glorious victories, followed by as great disasters, together with an inordinate love of pomp and magnificence, to which indeed France is indebted for some of its finest monuments, soon again reduced the people to a state of suffering; and though this reign is considered the most glorious period of French history, it was under cover of its brilliancy that the first seeds of the future Revolution were sown.

Towards the close of this reign the whole aspect of France was changed. The lands were lying waste, the provinces depopulated; the nation unquiet and discouraged; the government hated and despised. The finances were in a deplorable state, and no other resource left to restore them but a bankruptcy.

Further loans were out of the question. In order to raise eight millions (320,000*l.*) of ready money, the government signed bills for thirty-two millions, (1,280,000*l.*) The whole debt now amounted to two thousand three hundred millions, (92,000,000*l.*) The expenditure of 1715 was estimated at two hundred and five millions, (8,200,000*l.*) while the revenue to meet it was only one hundred and seventy-five millions, (7,000,000*l.*) Dark clouds hung over the destinies of France, and Louis, alone in his gorgeous palace, with his successor a child of five years old, pursued by dark and melancholy thoughts, gave himself up to Madame de Maintenon, and buried himself in religious devotions, which took a fanatic character from the influence of his confessor, Father Le-

* *Mémoire de Louis XIV.*, vol i.

tellier, an austere and hard-hearted Jesuit, who had succeeded the excellent Father Lachaise, and who dishonored the end of this reign by contemptible persecutions.

Louis XIV., like all despotic monarchs, detested all prominent individualities in the state, and the nobility, whose power and importance had been already so considerably diminished, dwindled under this reign into mere minions of the court, and though they continued in the enjoyment of their privileges, they no longer formed a body in the state. On the other side, the middle classes (*bourgeoisie*) renewed their alliance with the crown; enriched by their industry and distinguished by their intelligence, they soon took possession of all those places which were formerly reserved for the nobility alone, and among them was gradually developed that new power, public opinion,* which, ever varying and ever led, though ever with a false semblance of independence, became a mighty rival of the monarchs of Europe.

But of all the germs of a future Revolution, none were so big with disastrous consequences as the dissensions between the Jansenists† and the Jesuits, which, though originally a purely theological question, was soon embraced by the whole public, and Jesuit and Jansenist became the *noms de guerre* of the two factions that divided the state.

The cause of the Jesuits and that of the absolute

* It may be objected that public opinion must always have existed, but I use the word deliberately, as implying those vague theoretical and unhealthy speculations, on states and government, which have since then gone on augmenting to such a degree, in contradistinction to that judgment upon affairs, that watchfulness as to the acts of governments, which must always be salutary.

† The peculiar feature of Jansenism, and the one that has made it be looked upon as more dangerous to the Roman Catholic Church than any of the schismatic churches, is, that though differing from the Church in certain doctrines, and though condemned and even anathematized by the Church for this difference, they nevertheless persisted in forcing themselves upon the Church, and considering themselves as inseparable from it.

power of the king, seemed in all minds to be intimately connected ; whoever therefore hated the government hated the Jesuits, and took part with the Jansenists, who were thus made to represent the party of the opposition. It was not, however, that all those who embraced Molinism, or Jansenism, were at all anxious about grace or free will, (the points in dispute between the two religious parties,) but during those times when society was still earnestly religious, struggles for political interests wore the guise of theological discussions ; and Louis XIV., who was profoundly ignorant in these matters, nevertheless detested, with royal instinct, all that belonged to the Jansenists, because he found ranged under their banner all he had ever struggled against : the nobles, the magistracy, the liberties of the provinces, the remnants of the Fronde, and behind all these, the reformers. This party had grown with the faults and misfortunes of Louis XIV. ; it had blamed the war of succession, it had blamed the peace of Utrecht ; it censured all the acts of the government, it exaggerated the misery of the people ; it accused the king of inertness, of cruelty, of cowardice ; it said that he had entered into the order of the Jesuits, and that his confessor had made him take the oath of obedience.

It was a base opposition, working covertly, but it was the more alarming from its vagueness and mysteriousness ; its presence being felt everywhere, even among the ministers, the court, and the clergy, it having been joined by a great party of the latter, the Benedictines, the Oratorians, and other learned religious bodies.

Its fall was determined at court, but no one at that time suspected that the struggle thus commenced was to last fifty years, and was to be one of the principal causes of the ruin of the monarchy and of religion.

The growing strength of the Jansenists may, perhaps, have been greatly owing to the *ennui* which the court inspired, for the tastes of the courtiers had by no means changed with the tastes of the king. The semblance of austere manners and great devotion was put on to please a king, who, fallen as he was in their eyes, was still the dispenser of favors, but the love of pleasure and frivolity was at the bottom of their hearts; and court and people awaited with equal impatience the death of their formerly idolized monarch.

No sooner had this event taken place than the contempt in which he was held was manifested by the setting aside of his will, in which he had determined that during the minority of his successor, the kingdom should be governed by a council of regency, headed by his legitimized son, the Duke of Maine. The Duke of Orleans, supported by the parliament,* (gained over by the prospects of greater power held out to it by the Duke,) protested against this arrangement, as a violation of the constitution of the state, which enacted that supreme power should be vested in one alone, and as first prince of the blood he was named sole regent, in spite of the opposition of the Duke of Maine and his party.

* The character of the magistrates of that day has been eloquently described by a contemporary writer, renowned for his strict impartiality: "What magistrate of our day would interrupt his amusements, because, I will not say the peace of mind, but because the honor, or even the life of an unfortunate being was at stake? The title of magistrate is but too often a charter of idleness, bought on account of the honor it confers, and the functions exercised merely from *bienséance*. To ask a magistrate for justice, when he is intent upon amusing himself is considered an insult and a proof of bad manners. Their amusements are the sacred part of their lives, which no one dares intrude upon; and they prefer to wear out the patience of an unfortunate client, and risk losing a good cause, to curtailing a few moments from their sleep, or breaking off a game of cards or a useless conversation."—Fléchier, *Panegyrique de St. Louis*.

CHAPTER II.

Regency—General depravity of the Court—State of the Finances—Fraudulent transactions—Infamous measures—System of Law—Brilliant prospects—Reverse of the picture—Dubois—Death of the Duke of Orleans—His rule a disastrous period for France—French Literature—Voltaire—Duke de Bourbon—Fleury—Bull Unigenitus—Parliament exiled—Stanislas—Treaty of Vienna.

IMMEDIATELY on the Duke of Orleans being named regent, a violent reaction took place. The parliament having been called in to pronounce upon the last will of the monarch who had so long held it in subjection, hoped to regain some power; and the nobles hastened again to take the precedence of that class, which the protection of Louis XIV. had alone enabled to maintain its position. The mask of hypocrisy was thrown aside, and the courtiers vied with one another in surpassing their master in every species of vice. The corruption of morals which had hitherto been the infamous distinction of the court, was now spread through all classes, for the jovial ease and familiarity of the regent were imitated by his worthy disciples, and no roof was too humble, no home too sacred, no den of vice too low for them to make it the scene of their debauchery.

The external policy of France during the regency, directed by the execrable Dubois, who found it more advantageous to serve the enemies of his country than to attend to its interests, was of a nature still further to add to the national degradation, and, as if no species of demoralization should be left untried during this disgraceful period of French history, the financial measures which were resorted to were of the most iniquitous character.

The greatest difficulties which Louis XIV. had bequeathed to his successor resided in the state of the

finances. The expenditure was rated at two hundred and forty-three millions of francs, (9,720,000*l.*.) the revenue did not exceed a hundred and eighty-six millions, (7,440,000*l.*.) two years of which had been expended in advance, and bills amounting to seven hundred and forty-three millions (29,720,000*l.*.) were due, besides eighty-six millions (3,440,000*l.*.) of the rents de l'Hôtel de Ville. The poverty of the people was equal to the poverty of the royal treasury, and the only new taxes which could possibly be levied must therefore of necessity have been imposed upon the property of the nobles and the clergy. But the regent dared not brave the resistance he was sure to meet with in this quarter, and several palliatives were therefore suggested.

Instigated by his hatred of the financiers, the austere St. Simon proposed to convoke the States-General and to declare a national bankruptcy, but this plan was resisted by the Duke de Noailles, and rejected by the regent from fear of the States-General, not from any feeling of honor, for he did not shrink from adopting, in the midst of peace, the fraudulent measures to which Louis XIV. had had recourse, to save France from dismemberment. He suppressed a great number of offices which had been previously created, without reimbursing the sums for which they had been bought. He remelted and debased the coin of the realm, but did not gain by this operation more than seventy millions, (2,800,000*l.*.) because the re-coinage was partly performed out of the country; he revised the whole of the standing debt, and reduced it to two hundred and fifty millions, (10,000,000*l.*.) which he liquidated by an issue of government bonds, (*billets d'état*.) bearing interest of four per cent.; he diminished the interest on a part of the *rentes* of the Hôtel de Ville; and lastly, he created tribunals, called *chambres ardentes*,

to examine into the frauds and illicit gains of the farmers-general. These tribunals were surrounded by circumstances of terror and tyranny, which contrasted strangely with the usual good-natured weakness of the regent's character. The names of four hundred and sixty fathers of families were placed on the lists for proscription, and the most abominable means were resorted to in order to swell their number. Informers received rich rewards; servants were encouraged to denounce their masters under borrowed names; those who attempted to censure the denouncers were punished with death; spies were placed upon the *financiers* in their own houses, and the inquiries instituted went as far back as 1688. The greatest consternation reigned among the *financiers*; many of them committed suicide, others fled from the country; the prisons were filled; luxury began to disappear; capital lay dormant; and industry and commerce ceased. The people, who at first applauded the persecutions directed against those whom they with true instinct looked upon as enemies, began to murmur when several *financiers* were sent to the galleys, and one condemned to death. At length the persecuted in their despair had recourse to the courtiers, buying their intercession and interest in obtaining a diminution of the burdens laid upon them. The *noblesse*, for the sake of gain, willingly lent themselves to this baseness. The ladies of the court made a traffic of their influence. The members of the *chambre ardente* dishonored themselves by their venality. The public exulted at the ability shown by the farmers-general in parrying the attacks directed against them, and punished with songs and *bon-mots* the baseness and the cupidity of their protectors.

Thus was the government again defrauded of treasure

by means of the immorality it had itself contributed to disseminate. Out of two hundred and twenty millions, (8,800,000*l.*.) which it was calculated would be raised by these arbitrary taxes, only fifteen millions (600,000*l.*) found their way into the treasury; government bonds (*billets d'état*) fell eighty per cent. in value, and the public credit was entirely destroyed.

These measures were followed by that unequalled system of fraud, known by the name of its inventor, Law.*

* John Law, born about 1681, was a native of Edinburgh; in early life he showed great talents, and was in consequence employed to arrange the revenue and accounts of Scotland, which occupation, no doubt, gave a bias to his mind in favor of financial schemes. Through his persuasion the first public bank of circulation in Paris was established by the regent in 1716, and its management was intrusted to the projector. This bank obtained the privilege for twenty years for issuing notes, which, however, were exchangeable on demand for coin of the realm.

The public debt at this time amounted to one thousand five hundred millions, (60,000,000*l.*.) and was at from sixty to seventy per cent. discount. Law's bank was formed with the view of paying off this debt, by giving the public creditor the option of subscribing for bank shares and paying for the same in the public stock at par. As an inducement for purchasing these bank shares, the Mississippi Company was formed with a capital of one hundred millions (4,000,000*l.*) and joined to the bank. This company purchased the patent which had been granted to the Sieur Crozat in 1712, giving possession of the country of the Mississippi under the name of Louisiana. The sole right of trading to that quarter for twenty-five years was vested in the company. Many other advantages were given to the bank and the company in the form of privileges and monopolies; still it was a long time before all the number of shares were subscribed for. In 1719, the French East India Company and the Senegal Company were both incorporated with the Mississippi Company, which in consequence then enjoyed the monopoly of the trade of France. Such advantages soon began to operate upon public opinion, and crowds rushed forward to make investments in the stock of the company, so that in August of 1719, its price was driven up to five hundred per cent. In this month the general farm of all the public revenues of the country was granted to the company, all of whose privileges were by the same *arrêt* prolonged to the year 1770. In consideration of these concessions, the company agreed to advance to the government, for paying off the public debt, one thousand two hundred millions (48,000,000*l.*) at three per cent. A further sum of fifty millions (2,000,000*l.*) was paid by the company for the exclusive privilege of coining during nine years. In a few weeks the stock rose in price to one thousand two hundred per cent., when one hundred and fifty millions (6,000,000*l.*) were added to the capital by fresh subscribers at one thousand per cent., and this new capital was divided into very small shares, so that its purchase might be within

There are moments of madness among nations, and no people have experienced this oftener than the French, who are fickle, sanguine, and full of ardor for every thing new. One of these dangerous periods had now arrived. It was long since glory had been the passion of the nation. Upon matters of religion, calmness even to indifference prevailed. Since the time of the *Fronde*, none sighed any longer for liberty. The last traces of the spirit of chivalry were effaced; nothing but pleasure was now desired, and the unbridled love of pleasure awakened cupidity. All schemes for the gratification of this passion, which was now become an epidemic, were readily embraced; and Law's system was well calculated to lay hold of the imagination of those who understood nothing of it, but that it promised immense profits. Ignorance in matters of finance was very great in France; all the science of the capitalists consisted in lending out their money at usurious interest.

The projects of this man were dazzling and imposing to those who could not investigate them and discover the unsoundness of their foundation. All rushed forward to reap the golden harvest. The shares in his bank, and other companies which he formed, rose to an enormous price. Those whom Law had at first allured by his

the reach of a still larger class. By this means the company was enabled to lend to the government an additional sum of three hundred millions (10,000,000*l.*) at three per cent. In the midst of all this speculation, the bank had issued notes to the amount of one thousand millions (40,000,000*l.*,) and the abundance of money began to work very injurious effects. From November, 1719, to the following April, the price of Mississippi stock continued to rise until it reached to two thousand and fifty per cent. The immense circulation of money, however, produced a reaction, the stock fell, and bank notes became depreciated in value. Many expedients were practised by Law to prevent this downward movement. A forced and fictitious value was given to the paper money, and much injustice and tyranny was practised. To put a stop to these evils, the regent had recourse to a measure still more pernicious and iniquitous; he issued an *arrêt* reducing the stock and the bank notes to half of their nominal value. The ruin of the whole was soon accomplished after this step.

brilliant promises, employed the activity of their minds in enticing others. The story of these plausible schemes flew from mouth to mouth, and he who showed himself incredulous must have been gifted with no common courage. The fabrication of paper required for issue would have been found too slow, though the number of workmen and clerks engaged in preparing it, had been doubled and quadrupled. The inhabitants of the provinces looked with an envious eye upon the good fortune which seemed to smile upon the Parisians. They flocked to the capital; never before was there so great a concourse in Paris, excitement so general, luxury so extravagant. This ferment continued to increase from 1716 to 1720, till at length the issue of paper money, or bills circulated as money, became so enormous that the prices of all commodities rose exorbitantly, and land was sold at fifty years' purchase. Those capitalists who were large holders of notes realized their fortunes by the purchase of land, and thus so large a quantity of notes were thrown into the market that they began to fall in value. An *arrêt* appeared reducing the nominal value of the notes to one half, but they could now no longer be circulated at more than a tenth of their value. Then another *arrêt* was sent forth revoking the first. Many other arbitrary edicts were issued in the course of a month, but confidence could not be restored, and the bubble burst. This great financial *bouleversement* augmented the distress of the treasury, and destroyed public credit, depraved the higher classes still more, and excited many bad passions; but on the other hand it gave an impulse to commerce, and did not, in fact, impoverish France as a country. The capital remained, though distress was brought to individuals by change of property. "History," says Lemontey, "ought to signalize this epoch

as a most remarkable point of difference in the progress of the rulers and the ruled ; a point, whence the people always advancing in intelligence and wealth, and their chiefs constantly retrograding with their prejudices and their timidity, prepared frightful convulsions for both parties."

As if nothing sacred should be left unprofaned during this reign, Dubois, the master of Philip of Orleans in all those infamous vices in which he proved himself so great a proficient, was decorated with the purple of the church. He was first appointed Archbishop of Cambrai, and no murmurs of discontent were heard, when the See which the reverend Fenelon had occupied was desecrated by this monster. No means were then spared to obtain for him the cardinal's hat. The two rivals, George I. and James Stuart, were interested in his favor, and we need not add that this could not have been by fair means. The consent of the Emperor of Germany and the King of Spain was gained, eight millions of francs were expended at Rome, and Dubois at length gave himself up entirely to the Jesuits. The dissensions about the bull *Unigenitus** continued. Several bishops, as well as the uni-

* So called from its opening words, "*Unigenitus Dei Filius*." It was issued by Clement XI. in 1713, condemning a hundred and one propositions in a devotional work, written by *Père Quesnel*. This book had been universally read during a period of forty years, and great astonishment was excited in the Christian world by this bull of condemnation, since the greater part of the propositions which were thus condemned seemed to be orthodox. But Quesnel was a Jansenist, and the previous note upon this sect will throw some light upon the matter. A great clamor was raised against the bull in France ; the parliament would for a length of time not enregister it except with modifications. Louis XIV., under the influence of the Jesuits, considered this opposition as a revolt, and it is asserted that no less than 30,000 *lettres de cachet* were issued in consequence of it. But the persecuted Jansenists on their side did not spare their enemies, and among other weapons used ridicule ; as a proof of Louis XIV.'s hatred of Jansenism, it was said that a courtier having asked a favor for his brother, the king replied that that brother was suspected of being a Jansenist, to which the courtier gave in answer, "Sire, what calumny ! I can assure your Majesty that my brother is an atheist." The king replied in a reassured tone, "Ah, that is a different thing !"

versity, had appealed to a future council of the church against this bull, and the regent was therefore much embarrassed, when Dubois, whose power over him was unlimited, urged him to abandon the Jansenists. By dint of intimidation the parliament was made to record the bull without any modifications, and it thus became the law of the state and of the church, (1720.)

Notwithstanding, however, this great service rendered to the papal see, Clement XI. refused to name Dubois cardinal, but at his death, which ensued shortly after, the French faction in the conclave promised its support to Cardinal Conti, upon condition of his fulfilling the wishes of the ambitious upstart. Conti was weak enough to yield, but very soon after died, it is said, in consequence of the remorse he felt at having profaned the sanctity of religion, by thus throwing its mantle over every thing that was hideous in vice.

Soon after the king's attaining his majority, the Duke of Orleans, who dared not immediately exchange his title of regent for that of minister, had his favorite nominated to this post, but death soon put a stop to his administration, which was not wanting in vigor and activity. He was succeeded as minister by the Duke of Orleans, who, however, survived him only a few months. The lampoon placed on the tomb of the indolent mother of this prince, is one among the many instances of the contempt in which his memory was held. "Here lies Idleness—the mother of all the vices."

The eight years of the government of the regent had a fatal influence on the future destinies of France. He corrupted the morals of the nation by his example, destroyed the finances of the state by disastrous experiments, betrayed the interests of France to England, and brought the church into disrepute by placing a monster

of vice on the steps of the altar. Only one part of his conduct can be passed without censure ; he treated the young king with invariable tenderness and respect, and exerted himself to instil into his mind sound political views, and even instructed him himself in several branches of the science of government, which, from culpable negligence, not from incapacity, he had failed to practise during his own regency.

The amends he might thus have made to France for the disasters he had brought upon the country, were counteracted by the king's preceptor, Villeroy, who was in the habit of taking his royal pupil to the window, and pointing out to him the crowd assembled below, told him that the thousands that he saw there were his property to do with as he liked ; a lesson which was better suited to the degenerate mind of Louis XV., who, totally indifferent to the welfare of the millions over whom he was appointed to watch, spent their substance on his own vile pleasures, while he led the monarchy on to its ruin.

The social state of the eighteenth century arising out of feudal manners, and having nothing in it which was feudal, except recollections, forms, and broken fragments, was a state of society the foundations of which existed no longer ; it was in discord with ideas, and was governed less by institutions than by customs. The death-blow having been given to the feudal system, the next task was to clear away the rubbish which impeded the march of intellect, to annihilate the world of the middle ages, and to lay the foundations of a new world. Society in the middle ages being the work entirely of Christianity, and that having been the principal instrument which demolished the ancient world, Christianity was considered by the new philosophy as the symbol and the cause of barbarism ; as the enemy, the defeat of

which was to draw with it all remains of the feudal system, and begin the era of modern civilization.

The ruin of Christianity was then the end of the philosophy of the eighteenth century ; but this work of attempted destruction presents three distinct periods : that of Epicurean deism, and of scientific reform, preached by Voltaire ; that of the atheism of Diderot, and of the political reform of Montesquieu ; and that of the reaction of ideality, and of the democratic efforts of Rousseau.

Until this epoch philosophical literature was limited to licentious tales, satirical verses, and declamatory pamphlets. The *esprits forts* had not put forward their skepticism except in Bayle's *Dictionary*, an immense arsenal of erudition, and of dialectics, against religion, the scholiasts, and the middle ages. The spirit of investigation now became active in analyzing, experimenting on and dissolving every thing. Philosophy, licentious and correctional, Epicurean and philanthropical, issued for the first time from the schools, showed itself abroad, and pretended to regenerate mankind. The taste for political studies spread. Questions relative to the social state, to morals, to the institutions of the people, occupied all thinking minds. Sciences of which even the names did not exist before, political economy, and statistics, now arose. Literature, invaded by the exact sciences and by philosophy, became occupied more with ideas than with words, and desired before all, to instruct, reform, and put forth doctrines. France was a great tribune to which all Europe listened, while discourses were held on man, his nature, his rights, his interests ; and whence Voltaire, become the representative and the great master of his age, propagated his ideas of destruction, with a satanic energy, by his sententious tragedies, his innumerable letters, his satirical pamph-

lets, and above all, by his historical works, in which his profound intelligence of the past is continually falsified by his hatred against the middle ages.*

The Duke of Orleans was succeeded in the ministry by the Duke of Bourbon, a weak and profligate fool, who was entirely governed by his wicked mistress, the Marquise de Prie. His administration only lasted three years, and was distinguished by no other event than the breaking off of the intended marriage between the king and an Infant of Spain, in consequence of an intrigue of Madame de Prie, in which, says Lacrételle, "all the vices conspired in favor of virtue," if indeed the splendor of the crown of France can be considered a compensation for all the bitter humiliations which were the lot of the virtuous Maria Leczinski, as the wife of the vulgar debauchee with whom she shared this splendor.

The power which the Duke of Bourbon and his mistress had hoped to ensure to themselves by placing a *protégée* of their own upon the throne, was, nevertheless, soon wrested from them, in consequence of a very rigorous edict against the Protestants, which exasperated the so-called philosophers of the day ; while a tax of one-fiftieth imposed upon all landed property of the nobility and clergy, enlisted the privileged classes against them ; and a scarcity of food, in which it was thought they speculated for their own gain, made the populace rise, and occasioned some bloodshed.

The king's preceptor, Fleury, though of a very advanced age, now took the reins of government, and an administration of economy, industry, and probity, ensured a calm of some duration, in which the country began to revive. The finances were no longer given over to courtiers and stock-brokers—the variations in the mone-

* Lavallée.

tary system ceased ; the *tailles* were diminished, and the tax of one-fiftieth discontinued. The general receipts amounted to a hundred and forty millions, (5,600,000*l.*,) which were really paid into the treasury, and the credit of the state was respected. In consequence of the good faith which the minister showed in all transactions, he was enabled without much difficulty to raise a loan of eighteen millions, (720,000*l.*)

This period of calm was again disturbed by dissensions about the bull *Unigenitus*, which though seemingly of little importance now, at that period contributed greatly to bring the government into discredit, and to prepare the field for incredulity. Fleury, who was an adherent of the Jesuits, allowed no persecutions to be directed against the Jansenists, several magistrates were exiled, a bishop was imprisoned, and several doctors excluded from the University of Paris. The king held a bed of justice,* and the bull was again enregistered without modifications. The parliament protested in an *arrêt*, which went even further than the articles of 1682. The *arrêt* was annulled, and the king forbade the parliament to deliberate on public matters. The magistrates protested against this royal prohibition by ceasing to exercise their legal functions, and to administer justice, in consequence of which they were exiled but again recalled, when they assumed a semblance of submission, and the dissensions recommenced, without leading to any

* *Lit de Justice.* The king on such occasions proceeded to parliament with greater pomp and ceremonious state than on ordinary royal sittings. Under these circumstances, announcing that he was holding a bed of justice—it was considered the law that his order to register could no longer be disobeyed. No discussions were allowed, obedience only was required. The king had the power of banishing the whole parliament, in case of its being refractory, and this prerogative was frequently exercised during the last two centuries, the members being sent to some town fifty or sixty miles from Paris.

other result than to scandalize all minds; the unbelievers alone profited by the ridicule that fell upon both parties.

The death of Augustus II., king of Poland, in 1733, presented an excellent opportunity for France to stand forward in support of that country, which had already been marked out by its neighbors, Austria, Russia, and Prussia, for destruction. The Poles, who by their internal factions had given rise to the culpable hopes of these neighbors, seeing the dangers by which they were threatened, sought to avert them by choosing for themselves a national king. The diet bound itself by oath never to elect a foreign prince; all minds turned toward Stanislas Leczinski, father of the Queen of France, and the support of that country was solicited. But Cardinal Fleury did not sufficiently comprehend the future to be aware of the opportunity which thus presented itself of putting a stop to the progress of Russia, and when Stanislas was elected king by an immense majority, the means provided for him by France were so inefficient, that a despicable minority, gained over by the gold of the enemies of their country, were enabled to make a counter election under the protection of foreign bayonets. Stanislas was obliged to fly from Warsaw, and the small French force sent to his assistance was destroyed by the Russians.

Though Fleury did not comprehend the policy marked out for France with regard to Russia, he did not misunderstand the national policy with regard to Austria, and availed himself of the war to wrest some advantages from this ancient enemy of France. His measures were in this case so well taken, and the French generals carried on matters so successfully, that the epoch of the treaty of Vienna, (1735,) which concluded this

war, is considered the only glorious moment of the reign of Louis XV.

CHAPTER III.

War—Madame de Pompadour—The *Savans*—Schools of Philosophy—The Noblesse—The Clergy—The People—The Middle Classes—The Jansenists—Contests between the Parliament and the Archbishop of Paris—Interference of the King—War with England in North America.

THE war which soon after broke out between England and Spain, wherein France took a prominent part without any definite object, and carried it on at an immense expense of men and treasures, was concluded by the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, where Louis, though in a position at the moment to stipulate for some indemnities for the 500,000 men that had been sacrificed, for the ruined navy, and for twelve hundred millions (48,000,000*l.*) added to the national debt, chose to renounce every advantage for France, saying that he would treat as a king, and not as a shopkeeper; concealing under these absurd words his desire to conclude a war which swallowed up the sums which he would rather squander upon his infamous pleasures.

This conduct was dictated to Louis by his then reigning mistress, the Marquise de Pompadour, who had succeeded to the last of the five sisters de Nesle, who had each in their turn enjoyed this disgraceful distinction. Madame de Pompadour, a woman of low birth, but of great beauty and brilliant education, aided by some natural abilities, was not satisfied with the title of the king's mistress, (though such was the state of morality in the court of France, that this position was envied by the first ladies of the realm,) but she aimed at being a state

personage, and she did really for fifteen years enjoy all the power of a minister of state. The court was seduced by her entertainments and her prodigality; the literary men, particularly Voltaire, were gained by pensions and by flattery; and the public were won over by an affectation of benevolence, charity, and a mock air of philosophy and highmindedness. Louis XV. enjoyed the only happiness his degenerate soul was capable of appreciating; he was left in peace in his private apartments, where he led a life of indolence and profligacy, surrounded by a few favorite courtiers, and relieved of the care and the pomp of royalty. Madame de Pompadour, indifferent to the affections of the king, though anxious to maintain a post so flattering to her ambition, devised means to attain her object, the infamy of which has happily never been equalled. She instituted the *Parc au cerf*, of infamous notoriety, where, while she pandered to the base appetites of the royal libertine, she systematically degraded and demoralized her own sex.

A government sunk into such depths of immorality was but too favorable for the progress of social dissolution, and attacks against religion began to assume a most alarming character.

All minds were in a state of ferment. The different bodies disputed the direction of the most important affairs of state; the contest lay principally between the parliament and the clergy. All aspired to authority, while the monarch allowed his to decline; all were in movement, while he remained inactive. The disputes of the priesthood and the magistracy became so furious that a civil and religious war was to be feared. Some few statesmen, who desired to maintain peace; worldly people, who feared to be interrupted in the midst of their pleasures; and, lastly, the sincerely pious, who disavow-

ed, in the name of religion, those excesses of which they were made the pretext, called on the men of letters to calm this violent commotion. These last joined together to stifle, with the subject of dispute, the horrors of fanaticism which threatened to reappear; but they worked for this end by different means. Several among them wished to bring about a complete indifference to religion; others directed the minds of men to the observation of nature; while some proposed for their examination the highest thoughts on social order. Among these were some of great learning and of ardent character, endowed with that perseverance necessary for great undertakings, and with that ability which makes them successful. They loved novelty either from the impulse of native genius or from the desire of celebrity, which was their ruling passion.* Voltaire continued to undermine the social edifice, led on as it would seem by the mere love of destruction; but though he continued to be the first power in the literature of that day, his writings, devoid of all political ideas, no longer satisfied the ardor of the public, not only intent upon destruction, but also upon reform, and three new schools were established in accordance with the wants and desires of the times. These were Montesquieu's political school, Quesnay's school of political economy, and the school of materialism represented by the *Encyclopédie*.

Montesquieu was the first of the philosophical reformers who attempted to mark out a theory of government in conformity with their ideas, and when his *Esprit des Lois* appeared in 1748, this first dogmatical work on institutions was received with enthusiasm, though, compared to the irreligious boldness of other works of the

* Lacrételle.

day, it must have appeared very moderate. This very moderation, however, ensured its success, for it was not only the reformers who found in it a wide field for speculation, but all the statesmen of Europe were proud of proclaiming themselves his disciples.

The economists, headed by Quesnay, directed their efforts for reform towards the science of administration, found in the vices of the existing system, the fountain from which flowed all the miseries of France, and based upon the ameliorations they proposed making, the brightest hopes of future prosperity. Quesnay considered agriculture as the source of all wealth, and declaimed against the government which pressed upon the farmer and the proprietor in many different ways; he combated the existing mercantile system with its protections and prohibitions, and claimed entire liberty of commerce, particularly in corn; he wished to reduce all imposts to one tax upon the net produce of land. Though this school did not enjoy as great popularity as the less practical ones, which allowed greater scope for the imagination, the effects of the principles it advocated were more immediately felt, and France was indebted to its efforts for the famous edict of 1754, which took off all restrictions on the trade in corn.

The *Dictionnaire Encyclopédique*, which is generally considered the great caldron wherein was concocted all the poisonous ingredients which, during the revolution of 1789, spread a moral pestilence over the world, owed its origin to Diderot and D'Alembert, the chiefs of the school of materialism, which denied the existence of every thing which did not come under the cognizance of the senses,—of every thing the existence of which cannot be mathematically demonstrated; in one word, the existence of the soul, and of the Deity, but nevertheless

maintained the perfectibility of human nature. It was their zeal for the propagation of this last idea which gave rise to the *Encyclopedie*, that immense repository of human knowledge, begun in 1751, "which was meant to be a vast engine of war against religion, which was in reality but a tower of Babel, to which all minds, even those of the most contradictory characters, brought their stone."*

While the work of social destruction was progressing, the government, though too weak to venture upon any open acts of despotism, permitted the most arbitrary systems to be carried on in every branch of administration. The king, who maintained an external appearance of religious devotion in the midst of his licentious pleasures, expressed himself loudly against all innovations; but though he foresaw the future catastrophe, he troubled himself very little about it, consoling himself with the words: "*After us the deluge.*" His mistress, his courtiers, and even his ministers, not only regarded the progress of the philosophers as harmless, but were themselves imbued with their doctrines, and the resistance of the government to the growth of incredulity was weak and undecided, while by administrative measures, it openly favored its progress and undermined the power of the church. It supported the Jesuits, yet it forbade the establishment of any new convents or monasteries without the royal consent. An edict was promulgated (1749) which deprived the clergy of the right of acquiring new property; propositions were made to substitute a regular tax upon church property, for the usual *don gratuit* of the clergy. In a word, the government, though affecting to despise public opinion, was led en-

* Lavallée.

tirely by it, but at the same time it sought in no way to meet the salutary reforms that were called for. The imposts were augmented, the privileges of the *pays des états* were suppressed without resistance, every abuse was continued, and nothing worthy of commendation was established. The nobility generally, particularly the *noblesse de cour*, far from considering themselves threatened by the philosophical ideas which were spreading so fast, on the contrary adopted these notions themselves, not from conviction, or with any view of carrying them out into practice, but from a frivolous love of novelty and notoriety, and particularly because the epicurean doctrines of Voltaire favored their licentious manners. Though some of the nobles showed so much alarm at the spreading of the new doctrine, that, according to Duclos, "they feared the philosophers as thieves feared the lamp-post," it was nevertheless the fashion to patronise even the most unscrupulous among the atheists, and to associate with them on a footing of perfect equality, in spite of the great distinction which was even then made between the nobles and the *roturiers*, to which class a great many of the literary men belonged. But the nobility of that day cannot be better characterized than by saying that it imitated all the vices of the king.*

The clergy, wavering between intolerance and frivolity, wishing to put a stop to the spreading of the opinions of the day, yet too frequently adopting the morals of the times, invoking against skepticism the despised severity of a corrupt power, instead of combating it with knowledge and capacity—the clergy, and particularly the high clergy, remained weak, and were defeated on all sides in the midst of the general movement. They had no

* Villemain, Lavallée.

replies to give to Voltaire's falsehoods, sarcasms, and false erudition ; they scarcely ventured to emit a few feeble apologies, or some ineffective charges drawn up without skill or power. They were much more anxious to preserve their riches, than to proclaim their crucified God ; being incapable of any longer guiding the human mind, they began to quail before it, and trembling, called upon it to stop. The dogmas of evangelical morality were no longer heard from the pulpit, for the clergy sought forgiveness for their holy mission, by a display of worldly complacency. Faith was replaced by common morality, charity by social justice, the laws of God by the rights of the people. The sanctuary was abandoned.

After contemplating the condition of this royalty, so inert and degraded—of this noblesse, so vicious and tending towards social dissolution—of this clergy, without virtue, without zeal, and without learning ; let us see what part those sections of the nation played upon whom all the social inequalities pressed so heavily. The lower classes, both in town and country, were brutal, ignorant, and miserable ; more miserable in some respects than they had been in the middle ages. Industry was shackled by the corporations, the apprenticeships, the system of oaths ; all this legislation of Colbert became an intolerable combination of petty tyrannies. Agriculture was oppressed by feudal service, tithes, forced labor, right of chase, and a crowd of absurd privileges enjoyed by the nobility. The working classes had preserved their religious faith, because they were under the influence of only the poor and evangelical part of the clergy. They detested the great landed proprietors, (*seigneurs*,) because they found in them their immediate and constant tyrants ; they had not any affection for the government,

in which they saw nothing but insatiable and merciless tax-gatherers, a despotic police, a luxurious and corrupt court, and a debauched king. Philosophical ideas had not penetrated as far as the multitude, but they had nevertheless a sort of instinctive desire for social renovation, which resolved itself, according to their view, in the abolition of all privileges.

The middle classes (*la bourgeoisie*) had never been so active, so rich, so enlightened; it was those classes who formed public opinion, and who were the strength of the state. They equalled the *noblesse* in fortune and in style of living, and surpassed the clergy in education; they possessed the social virtues in a much higher degree than these two classes, yet they were not permitted to attain to superior rank in the army, nor to ecclesiastical dignities, nor to high offices in the administration: almost all the weight of the taxes fell upon them; it was they who had the most to suffer from the tyranny of the ministers, from the vengeance of the courtiers, from the iniquity of the police. These classes were full of ardor in embracing the new opinions called philosophical, full of confidence in their own strength, and of faith in the future. Beholding the highest ranks of society revelling in the depths of sin, and parading with effrontery all their coarse depravity before the eyes of the public, feeling that those in authority did less for them in proportion as their strength and their desires increased; they began to think that it belonged to them to take affairs into their own hands; and already they meditated on the necessity of calling at the same time on the crown for liberty, on the aristocracy for equality, and on the clergy for the rights of the human intellect.*

* Guizot.

Just as the antagonism against the higher classes was revealing itself, and gradually gaining strength, the contests between these classes, contests which had hitherto formed a prominent feature in French history, had ceased. This was the necessary consequence of their common decay. The aristocracy and the clergy, submissive to the throne, protected it by the sword and the censer, in return for its defence of their privileges. These three parties, reconciled to each other, entered into an intimate and mutual alliance for maintaining all existing things, whether just or unjust, by all and any means whatever—an imprudent alliance, at least on the part of the clergy, and of the throne, whose conversion rather than whose ruin the people desired, and which hastened their common destruction.

The state of public feeling towards the middle of the eighteenth century seemed to threaten an approaching war between the people and the ruling powers. But the people had not yet concentrated all their strength and all their hatred; the ruling powers had not yet heaped up the measure of their iniquities. The clergy were yet to complete their fall by miserable disputes, through which the two parties dividing society, the Jesuits and the Jansenists, would be destroyed.

In the mean time disputes continued between the clergy and the Jansenists, whose only adherents were now to be found in the parliaments, and the measures which were taken finally to put them down, were unfortunately of a nature still farther to aggravate the evils to which these dissensions had given rise.

According to orders received from the archbishop, the curates of Paris refused to administer the last sacrament to those who could not present a *billet de confession*, signed by a Molinist priest, (1752.) Upon learning this

the parliament interfered in a most intemperate manner, ordered a curate who had acted in conformity to the orders of his superior to be arrested, declared that the bull was not an article of faith, and forbade the clergy to refuse the sacrament. The latter, however, persisted, and the parliament then had recourse to military force, and had the sacrament administered in the midst of their bayonets. It is easily conceived what must have been the effects of such scandalous scenes on a skeptical and demoralized public. A mixture of fanaticism and impiety, rage and ridicule, produced a most deplorable state of anarchy, which was fast dissolving the social body. The court wavered between the two parties; the ministers were ranged upon different sides. At last the parliament seized upon the property of the Archbishop of Paris, remonstrated vigorously against the ministerial despotism which supported the clergy, and declared that it would remain sitting until it had obtained justice. In consequence of these measures the whole parliament was exiled, (1753,) and a *chambre provisoire* was created to administer justice; public opinion, however, was so opposed to this chamber, that the parliament was soon recalled, but at the same time all discussions on religious subjects were forbidden by order of the king, who was disagreeably disturbed in his pleasures by these discussions.

The clergy, however, soon recommenced the disputes; the court then declared itself in favor of the parliament, and the Archbishop of Paris was in his turn exiled. But in the exultation of victory, the parliament forgot moderation; it suppressed a very indulgent *brief* of Benedict XIV., who had endeavored to put a stop to the dissensions; it openly attacked the bull that had been declared the law of the state, and insisted upon uniting itself with

the other parliaments of the kingdom, which should thus form a kind of confederacy; refused to enregister the taxes, and aimed at arrogating to itself the power of the States-General.

The king, incited by the clergy, determined to put down the refractory magistrates in a most decided manner, and for that end held a bed of justice, wherein all the steps taken by the parliament were declared illegal, and this body was prohibited for the future from interfering in these matters.

The *chambre des enquêtes* was suppressed, the organization of the other chambers altered, and who ever dared to stray from the duties imposed upon them, were threatened with the royal displeasure. Upon this one hundred and fifty members of the parliament tendered their resignation. Paris was in a ferment, and ready to revolt at the slightest word from the magistrates, for though the parliament, as well as all the other bodies in the state, was thoroughly demoralized, and had swerved entirely from its original intention, it was identified by the people with the cause of resistance to the royal power, and therefore looked upon as one of the guardians of their liberties. Its disgrace was considered a public calamity, and full vent was given to the feelings of disgust and execration with which the king was regarded.

In the mean time war had broken out between England and France in North America, and was soon succeeded by the seven years' war, during which the king and the nobility of France forfeited their last claims to the esteem of the people, and during which the disasters of the army were only equalled by the miserable state of the finances. Madame de Pompadour, who chose the ministers as she did the generals, from among the class of abject courtiers that surrounded her, considered do-

cility to her demands the first quality in the comptroller of the finances, and immense sums were squandered away for the most infamous purposes, while the ministers of finance were reduced to the most immoral and disastrous means for furnishing the treasury.

CHAPTER IV.

Rising importance of France as a Nation—The Philosophers—Blind security of the Government—Fall of the Jesuits—Death of the Dauphin—State of the Finances—Marriage of Louis with Marie Antoinette—Suppression of the Parliaments—Misery of the People—*Pacte de Famine*—Death of Louis XV.

WHILE the degradation of the government continued to progress, France rose as a nation. The supremacy which it had obtained under Louis XIV., by the glory of its arms and its social splendor, was inferior to that which it enjoyed under Louis XV., simply by the force of intellect. Literature stood in the place of glory, power, and liberty. All eyes were upon her. There was not a sovereign or a statesman who, either from hypocrisy or from blindness, did not flatter political philosophy, hoping to make it an instrument either of despotism or of popularity.

Theories were formed by which the happiness of the human race was to be ensured; probity, honor, citizenship, the love of humanity, appeared such simple virtues, that attempts were made to reduce them to rules, the same as an arithmetical calculation. These noble sentiments were submitted to an analysis, from which it was said they would come out purer and more fruitful in good, but which had no other effect than to corrupt them.

In this great shipwreck of all ideas, moral and reli-

gious, political and social; in this anarchy of thought, which tended to pass into action; while Voltaire and the Encyclopédists, Montesquieu and the Economists only destroyed,—a powerful genius arose, who pretended to build up, to reanimate ideality, to lay a political foundation for a new state of society: this was J. J. Rousseau. The skepticism of Voltaire, the atheism of Diderot, the egoism of Helvetius, appeared much less attractive than the Socinian faith, the passionate spirituality, and even the ideas of self-devotion and of duty, put forth by this unstable man of genius. Till he appeared, the philosophers had sought to convert only the higher classes to their doctrines; but he addressed the masses. None had more boldly promoted a political revolution. Yet this pretended re-constructor destroyed more than all the others; he excited the sympathies more, and had more disciples. His school was more sincere, more serious, more enthusiastic, than the other schools of philosophy; it had a true and generous faith in the future; it saw the revolution approach with a grave and solemn joy. But unhappily it was wholly visionary, revelling in theories which could not be reduced to practice, and wanting that firm foundation of religious principle without which all reforms must in time prove fallacious.

Rousseau's character and conduct as a man were despicable; showing that impulse or personal feeling, rather than principle, impelled him to put forth his vague and unsound fancies with regard to the social state; thus he has left a memory more worthy of the tears than of the gratitude of posterity.

What a lesson do the pernicious effects of the theories of these philosophers read to future ages. All foresaw*

* Voltaire wrote exultingly: "I have done more in my time than Luther and Calvin; every thing I see gives evidence of the seeds of a revolution,

a revolution, all vaguely expected that some unknown good would arise out of the ashes of that destruction which they so mercilessly assisted in bringing about. Genius and profound thought were engaged in forming theories for the renovation of France; they destroyed but could not build up, because they were wanting in the vital principle. Religion, veneration, humility, reliance on God, were forgotten in the all-absorbing sense of the dignity and perfectibility of our own nature. There was nothing divine in these speculations for the improvement of mankind, and therefore they crumbled into dust, involving in their own ruin, venerable institutions, in which still was preserved, though amid corruption, that latent spark of divine good, which might have revived and again given life to the whole.

After the conclusion of the seven years' war, the rumbling of the volcano that was soon to burst in France became more and more distinct, and one stone after another was loosened from the ancient monarchy of France, while the rulers looked on in calm content, thinking that it was their strength which was destroying what was in their way, not aware that the edifice was crumbling to pieces from internal rottenness. The Jesuits, whose power had, for the last century, been on the wane, and who had particularly suffered in public opinion in France, since their dissensions with the Jansenists, at last succumbed under the blows which were directed against them from all sides, and the church, one of the pillars of

which will infallibly arrive, and which I shall not have the pleasure of witnessing. The smothered flame is spreading nearer and nearer, and it will burst out on the first occasion; then there will be a fine turmoil. The young are very happy; they will see extraordinary things."—*Lettre à M. de Chauvelin*, 1762.

Rousseau wrote in 1760: "We approach the time of crisis and the age of revolution. I consider it impossible that the great powers of Europe can last much longer."

the state, lost its firmest support. The court, the royal family, and all ranks in the kingdom, were in so excited a state, that Louis XV. felt himself obliged to take measures against the Jesuits; but while consenting to their abolition, he wished it to appear that he had been forced into this measure, as if the greatest danger to kings was not in acknowledging the constraint under which they act. The parliament exulted, but its time was also soon to come.

While the king continued his profligate course, regardless of public affairs, he was overtaken by domestic calamities. The dauphin, whose virtues formed a touching contrast to the depravity of the court, died, (1765,) leaving three sons, all future kings of France. Louis, in the first access of his grief, returned to the bosom of his family, and for a while seemed to have renounced his vicious habits; but this was but of short duration, and on the death of his amiable queen in 1768, he replunged into all his former excesses.

The peace had sufficed, in a certain measure, to restore industry and commerce, but it could not re-establish the finances. The seven years' war had added thirty-four millions of *rentes* to the debt. Although all the war taxes were continued, the expenses every year exceeded the receipts. The financial operations were carried on by anticipating and borrowing. In the collecting and distributing of the revenue, defalcations and robberies were committed to an extent which it is impossible to ascertain. All the comptrollers sank under these difficulties; as soon as they spoke of the reduction of expenses, of the equal assessment of imposts, of reforms in the collecting of taxes; they raised against themselves the court, the privileged, and the farmers of the revenues. Choiseul, an indifferent statesman, troubled

himself but little as to the state of the finances, which was undermining the foundation of the throne. He hoped one day to restore these by the suppression of monasteries, and a tax upon ecclesiastical property. Like almost all the nobles, he stopped at the philosophy of Voltaire, and his hatred against the clergy; he despised the Encyclopédistes, and hated Rousseau; he wished to restore the monarchy, by regenerating the *noblesse*, and by giving it the support of the parliaments.

During this dreadful state of the finances and misery of the working classes, while a distressing scarcity and consequent riots raged in Paris, the marriage of the Duke de Berri, become dauphin by the death of his father, took place with the Archduchess Marie Antoinette, daughter of Maria Theresa, empress of Austria. The festivals in honor of this event were celebrated with the most extraordinary pomp and prodigality, forming a revolting contrast to the scenes through which the poorer classes were struggling. During a fête given in the Place Louis XV., a frightful catastrophe occurred, in which eleven or twelve hundred persons lost their lives: a fearful omen of the mistakes and misfortunes which were to follow, and darken the future lives of this amiable and ill-fated young couple. The parliaments, since their victory over the Jesuits, believed themselves the prop of society, and the masters of the government. While on one side they reacted violently against incredulity, in pursuing the philosophers and their works, and endeavored to reanimate the fanaticism extinguished by the iniquitous condemnation of Calas and La Barre,*

* Calas, a Protestant of Toulouse, accused of having killed his son who wished to become a Catholic, was condemned to the wheel and executed. His innocence was afterwards ascertained, and fully established through the generous and unremitting exertions of Voltaire.

La Barre, "vehemently suspected of having broken a cross," was beheaded.

on the other hand they braved the governors and intendants of the provinces, and were opposed to all money edicts. The government finding them too strong for its weakness, resolved upon their ruin.

Choiseul upheld the pretensions of the parliament, which continued to increase till it came to an open struggle with the throne. The king held a bed of justice, and annulled its *arrêt* against the Duke d'Aiguillon—the parliament declined to continue its judicial functions. The minister having excited, by his unconcealed disgust, the enmity of the new and infamous mistress of the king, she succeeded in obtaining his exile. This dismissal was considered as a public calamity, especially when his place was filled by D'Aiguillon. This man had been governor of Brittany, and had excited the most violent hatred by his tyranny and extortion. The attorney-general, La Chalotais, declared that it was the united wish of all Brittany to be delivered from so worthless a governor. La Chalotais, the friend of Choiseul, and the enemy of the Jesuits, well known by his report against the order, had been, by the secret intrigues of the Jesuits, and on the information of the governor, arrested, accused of a conspiracy for overthrowing the monarchy, and threatened with sentence of death. The parliaments had made energetic remonstrances, and public opinion was strongly in favor of the accused. Through the entreaties of Choiseul, the king had stopped the proceedings, and sent Chalotais into exile. D'Aiguillon, recalled from the government of Brittany, had assisted in the intrigue for the downfall of the minister, and he and his coadjutors soon completed their work, by the suppression of the parliament.

On the night of the 19th January, 1771, all the members of parliament were arrested in their houses, and

summoned to answer simply "Yes," or "No," to an order for resuming their functions. All answered "No." Then an *arrêt* of the council declared their places forfeited, and condemned them to exile.

The power which the parliaments possessed, the place which they held in the kingdom, the prominent part which they had been able so lately to play, all concurred in creating a belief that a revolution must follow such a *coup d'état*, which even Louis XIV. would not have attempted. Princes and peers protested; the *cour des aides* and the provincial parliaments were loud in remonstrances and menaces. But the agitation stopped there. The philosophers applauded, as they had applauded the destruction of the Jesuits. The government still continued to work for them. The people remained unmoved. In order to gain public opinion, it was decreed that justice should be exercised gratuitously, that magisterial places should no longer be hereditary, and that a new code, both civil and criminal, should be formed. These were reforms which the philosophers had many times called for.

The king held a bed of justice, in which he formally suppressed the parliament of Paris, and the *cour des aides*; transformed the *grand conseil* into a new parliament, and divided its jurisdiction into six *conseils supérieurs*. This was the work of the Chancellor Maupeou, who was in strict alliance with the favorite.

All the other parliaments submitted with more or less opposition to the same recomposition; and at the end of a year this great body of the magistracy had disappeared, as if by enchantment, and without resistance. "Everybody was stupified by a change so easily made. The court was so blind as to believe that the nation wished for a despotic monarchy; no one understood the

terrible lesson which it taught. It showed that all the wheels of the government machinery were entirely rotten, since even the organ of resistance, touched by the finger of the minion of a prostitute, fell into dust. But neither Louis XV. nor Maupeou discerned any thing more than that the king was stronger than Louis XIV.,—the chancellor greater than Richelieu. They had restored absolute monarchy, since the two parties which divided society—the Jesuits and the Jansenists—had disappeared. With what phrensy were all the social powers then struck, since they strove only to destroy each other! And by what hands! Madame de Pompadour had overthrown the Jesuits, Madame Dubarry the Jansenists. *These* were the champions of the government of Louis XV. Blind royalty! that applauded itself for having broken the only two weapons which could resist innovation, and who believed itself at the apogee of its power, because it remained alone before the people!”

The ruin of the parliaments enabled the corrupt court to traffic with still greater impunity in places, pensions, and every thing by which money could be obtained. The expenses of the king and his abandoned mistress were enormous, and the deficiency of the year (in 1770) amounted to seventy-four millions. A national bankruptcy ensued; and the people were grievously oppressed by the injustice and dishonesty which were practised by the government to raise money.

The middle class, with its flourishing commerce, supported this enormous burden; but it was not so with the people, who, besides the shackles placed upon industry, and the numberless charges which took from them the produce of their labor, had also to suffer from continual scarcities of food, brought on by the most infamous ma-

nœuvres. Freedom of internal commerce in grain, decreed in 1754, had been revoked during the seven years' war; but, in 1764, the economists had caused it to be re-established, and even had obtained liberty for exportation. Then a secret society was formed, (in which the king himself held shares for ten millions of francs,) which bought up all the corn and exported it, thus causing the price to rise enormously, and then reimported the same grain with immense profits. The public clamor became so great, that in 1770 the minister was obliged to forbid the free circulation of grain, but the *pacte de famine* was not destroyed. The buying up continued in the interior. The king openly jobbed in the prices of corn, boasting to everybody of the infernal lucre which he made out of his suffering subjects. The society did not bring into the market the grain so iniquitously bought up, till the latest moment, when either the people must have revolted or have died of hunger. No one dared to expose this abominable *pacte*, which had accomplices everywhere, even in the parliaments. Writers were forbidden, under pain of death, to speak of the finances, and the least complaint was stifled in the dungeons of the Bastille. The people, on the other hand, pushed to the extremity of misery, conceived the most atrocious hatred against the government, the nobles, and the wealthy—hatred which was one day to turn into frightful vengeance.

Thus the despotism and the vices of the government but too well prepared the soil for the reception of the seed which the philosophers were busy in sowing, and the people of France were fast approaching that state, when to hold in reverence what was sanctified by the lapse of centuries was considered narrow-minded prejudice; when the goddess Reason!! became the only

deity before which they bent their knee ; when they entirely forgot that “ all institutions that are not based upon a religious idea can only be transient ;” when “ the divine right of kings ” was scoffed at by every fool, who was incapable of comprehending the deep wisdom embodied in those words ; when the laws of France—that which made France, France—were made to commit suicide upon themselves, by pronouncing judgment against the Monarch, at once the source and the basis of all law ;* and when even those who wished to prove that France must be monarchical, dared to go no higher for their proof than to say that “ France was geometrically monarchical.”

At length death (1774) released France from the despicable king who had brought monarchy into contempt. "But figure his thoughts, when death is now clutching at his own heart-strings; unlooked for, inexorable! Yes, poor Louis; Death has found thee. No palace walls or life-guards, gorgeous tapestries, or gilt buckram of stiffest ceremonial, could keep him out; but he is here—here at thy very life-breath, and will extinguish it. Thou, whose whole existence hitherto was a chimera and scenic show, at length becomest a reality. Sumptuous Versailles bursts asunder, like a dream, into void immensity. Time is done, and all the scaffolding of Time falls, wrecked with hideous clangor, round thy soul. The pale kingdoms yawn open: there must thou enter,—naked, all unkinged, and await what is appointed

* The cease of Majesty
Dies not alone ; but, like a gulf, doth draw
What's near it, with it : it is a massy wheel
Fix'd on the summit of the highest mount,
To those huge spokes ten thousand lesser things
Are mortis'd and adjoin'd ; which, when it falls,
Each small annexment, petty consequence,
Attends the boist'rous ruin.—SHAKESPEARE.

thee ! Unhappy man ; there as thou turnest in dull agony on thy bed of weariness, what a thought is thine ! Purgatory and hell-fire, now all too possible, in the prospect : in the retrospect,—alas ! what thing didst thou do, that were not better undone,—what mortal didst thou generously help,—what sorrow hadst thou mercy on ? Do the ‘ five hundred thousand ’ ghosts, who sank shamefully on so many battle-fields, from Rosbach to Quebec, that thy harlot might take revenge for an epigram, crowd round thee in this hour ? Thy foul harem : the curses of mothers, the tears and infamy of daughters ? Miserable man ! thou hast done evil as thou couldst. Thy whole existence seems one hideous abortion and mistake of nature—the use and meaning of thee not yet known. Wert thou a fabulous griffin, *devouring* the works of men, daily dragging virgins to thy cave : clad also in scales that no spear would pierce,—no spear but death’s ! A griffin—not fabulous, but real ! Frightful, O Louis, seem these moments for thee. We will pry no further into the horrors of a sinner’s deathbed.

“ And yet let no meanest man lay flattering unction to his soul. Louis was a ruler ; but art not thou a so one ? His wide France, look at it from the fixed stars, (themselves not yet infinitude,) is no wider than thy narrow brick-field, where thou too didst faithfully, or didst unfaithfully. Man, ‘ symbol of eternity, imprisoned into time ! ’ it is not thy works, which are all mortal, infinitely little, and the greatest no greater than the least, but only the spirit thou workest in, that can have worth or continuance.”*

It was the populace who had insulted the remains of Louis XIV. ; all classes of the nation outraged the memory of Louis XV. But the tokens of contempt and ha

* Carlyle’s *French Revolution*. Vol. i., p. 25.

ted were exhausted in a few days. All were happy to be able to forget a king, who for so long a time had been considered incurably weak and wicked.

CHAPTER V.

Accession of Louis XVI.—His Character—Maurepas—Turgot—His projected Reforms—Reinstatement of the Parliament—Turgot's Measures—His Colleagues—Marie Antoinette—Riots in Paris—Turgot's Dismissal—Joseph II.

LOUIS XVI., who succeeded to the throne at the age of twenty, had been brought up away from the corrupt atmosphere of his grandfather's court; but though he had, by nature and education, received every quality that gives grace and happiness to private life, he was unfortunately deficient in those sterner attributes of the mind, and in that firmness and decision of character of which no prince ever stood more in need. Called to the throne under circumstances of most peculiar difficulty, called, as it were, to stop the downward course of a mighty avalanche, he found in himself no other power than the pious prayers and the benevolent wishes of a pure and honest heart. He was habitually serious, and embarrassed in manner, and wore an air of sadness, as if he had had some presentiment of his destiny. He dared not express all the benevolence which was in his heart. Because he was timid he was thought to be suspicious. Though there was nothing in him which denoted *finesse*, he discovered vice in others even under an exterior of most bewitching elegance. The court seemed to be to him a foreign soil, in which every thing perplexed him. He was austere and simple in appearance, industrious in his habits, penetrated with a high sense of his duties,

and full of excellent intentions ; but he was at the same time timid and narrow-minded, wanting in dignity of manner, and, more than all, wanting in energy and perseverance. His mind was not powerful enough to penetrate beyond the vague theories of the speculators and reformers of the day, and to find in the ancient constitution of the realm the true limits to his own power, and the proper guarantees of the liberty of his people ; it therefore recoiled before the immense task which was before him, while his heart yearned to perform it.

His first choice of a minister was a most unfortunate one, and contributed greatly to stamp the character of irresolution upon his reign ; for the Comte de Maurepas, though of advanced age, and though disgraced under Louis XV., for opposition to his mistress, was, nevertheless, a man of a most frivolous and unprincipled character, a courtier rather than a statesman, and therefore always inclined to consider his master's favor, and not the interests of the state. With a master such as Louis, the former would always have been the result of the latter, had the power of his intellect equalled the purity of his intentions ; but, as it was, he soon became confused by the varying representations of the conflicting parties, and contracted the habit of using half measures, of continual changes of system, of inconsistent exertions of power, and of doing every thing by others, and nothing by himself. It seemed for a moment, however, as if the state and the king were to be saved from the dangers that threatened them, by a man who, to all the benevolent qualities of Louis, joined that firmness and perseverance in action, and that comprehensiveness of intellect, which are necessary for projecting and putting into practice great and useful reforms. Turgot, one of the ministers whom Maurepas had associated with himself,

together with Miromesnil, Saint-Germain, Sartine, and Vergennes, was a man of profound, persevering, and energetic genius. He entertained the most exalted notions of the destinies of mankind, and joined to very extensive information and great practical knowledge of men and affairs, a consummate acquaintance with every branch of administration. He had acquired a high reputation by his writings, and by the wonders of administration which he had performed as Intendant of Limoges, and was considered by public opinion, when he was called to the department of the finances, as the only statesman of the day. Indeed, if there had been in the king sufficient energy of character to support his minister, and in the people the traditions of true liberty, to meet and to second his efforts, a revolution might have been effected, which, emanating from the crown, would have re-established its consideration, and reawakened in the people the sense of veneration, and of obedience to established ancient forms, and spared it the fearful career of madness and crime which ended in a despotism greater than any under which it had suffered; a despotism which, in spite of constitutional forms, still weighs upon the unconscious people of France. For, though Napoleon fell, his work lives, and the iron bonds of centralization, which he laid round France, are entering into her soul, unknown to herself, and destroying the very instincts of liberty.

The principal projects which at that time occupied the minds of the public were, unlimited freedom of trade, gradually introduced; the suppression of many unjust taxes levied upon necessary articles of consumption; and, above all, the abolition of the excise upon salt, (*gabelle*,) of forced labor, (*corvées*,) and of feudal services; the conversion of the two-twentieths (tax on revenue)

and the poll-tax into a territorial impost, to which both clergy and nobility should be subject ; the equal partition of the land-tax, according to the register of lands, (*cadastre*;) liberty of conscience ; the recall of fugitive Protestants ; the suppression of monasteries, leaving the existing occupants the possession for life ; the redemption of feudal duties, as far as consistent with a respect for property ; the abolition of torture, and a revision of the criminal code ; a single civil code in place of the prevailing mixture of common law (*droit coutumier*) and Roman law ; uniformity of weights and measures ; the suppression of wardenships and privileges of corporations, and of all obstacles to the free exercise of industry ; the abolition or modification of every thing which produced differences of interest in the various provinces of the kingdom.

Turgot undertook to satisfy these wants ; and, notwithstanding the miserable state of the finances, his declaration on accepting office was, "No bankruptcies, no augmentation of imposts, no new loans." But to put into execution so many innovations, in opposition to so many private interests, a sovereign will was required, capable of crushing all resistance ; and the king hesitated upon entering upon this vast career. His heart yearned towards the measures which were to ensure the happiness of his people, but his timidity recoiled before the difficulties which lay in the way of their execution, and his good nature was averse to give pain to a few, though for the benefit of the many.

Maurepas, on his side, was frightened at projects which he did not comprehend ; and both prepared in advance the failure of the great minister, by creating a centre of union for the interested feelings of those castes and individuals, who defended abuses and resisted inno-

uations. Looking around for means of strength, the latter saw, in the reinstatement of the parliaments, a hope of the maintenance of their privileges; and Maurepas being gained over to their plans, which coincided perfectly with his own desire of curbing the growing power of the minister of finance, the king was importuned with prayers and advice to adopt this measure. In vain did Turgot urge that the proposed system of local administration and municipal courts offered much greater and surer guarantees to the people against the despotism that they so much feared, and that the parliament, regarding its reinstatement as a sign of its own strength, and not as a boon of the sovereign, would but be the more presumptuous and the more to be feared, because of its long disgrace. Maurepas, on his side, insisted on the necessity of this measure, to counterbalance the power of the clergy and of the philosophers; and the king at last yielded, thinking that the re-establishment of this ancient institution could but tend to strengthen the social order. But institutions lose their value when men lose the thoughts which have given rise to them, and the parliament of Paris, which had for years only been the mouthpiece of a faction, had not imbibed a new spirit during the time of its disgrace, and, instead of becoming the true defender of liberty, by promoting wholesome reforms, but at the same time stemming the torrent of innovations which threatened to become too violent, it took the character of an adversary of royalty and a defender of all other privileges, thus preventing reform from emanating from its proper source, and forcing the people to take it into their own hands.

Turgot, on entering the ministry, found the finances embarrassed by a deficit of twenty-two millions of francs, (880,000*l.*,) and the revenue of the coming years an-

anticipated to the amount of seventy-eight millions, (3,120,000*l.*) In two years he paid off twenty-four millions (960,000*l.*) of the debt in arrears, made up twenty-eight millions (1,120,000*l.*) of the anticipated revenue, and reimbursed fifty millions (2,000 000*l.*) of *la dette constituée*. He created a *caisse d'escomptes*, the origin of the bank of France, which was the first establishment of the kind attempted since the time of Law, and abolished a number of restrictions that weighed upon industry and agriculture. But with these he perhaps abolished many an ancient regulation, which, being in contradiction with surrounding circumstances, seemed worse than worthless in the eyes of those who looked no deeper than the surface, but which were links of a chain which, though broken, might have been mended, and would have formed that bond between the past and the future which ought never to be dissevered.

But Turgot, with all his virtues, was still a man of the eighteenth century, and with him, therefore, reform and innovation were synonymous.

With regard to agriculture, Turgot agreed with Sully, and was wont to say, "that the husbandman and the shepherd were the true purveyors of the state." With regard to industry, his views were much more elevated and extended than those of Colbert, and he proclaimed that "the right to work is the first property which man possesses, and is the most sacred and the most inalienable." In order to relieve these two great sources of prosperity from the obstacles that impeded their full development, three great innovations were requisite; these were, the abolition of the restrictions upon the corn trade, the suppression of wardenships and privileges of corporations, and the imposition of a land-tax to be equal for all; upon these rocks his power was split.

Maurepas was jealous of the favor with which Turgot was regarded by the king; the court was alarmed at the system of economy proposed by the minister, and the nobility saw that the course followed by the government was most threatening to their privileges; for the colleagues of Turgot had followed his example, and each, in his department, sought to introduce reforms. Thus Saint Germain attacked the nobility in their military honors, and suppressed several corps of the king's household troops. Sartine had succeeded in suppressing some of the pretensions of the royal navy, most insulting to the merchantmen; and Malesherbes, a friend of Turgot's, who had been admitted to the royal council as minister of the household, reformed the odious system of *lettres de cachet*,* proposed the suppression of the censorship, and wished to re-establish the edict of Nantes.

The orders of the state threatened by these innovations, entered into a conspiracy against Turgot, which was the more formidable from their having induced the queen to take part in it, who, though she loved her hus-

* So called, because these were folded and sealed letters, in contradistinction to "Letters Patent," which were open. They were employed on various occasions, on which the king's personal and royal authority was to be exercised. Sometimes on most unimportant matters; but the use of them which is best known, was to order the banishment or imprisonment of any person who had not been proceeded against in any course of law. This unlimited power of imprisonment was a most fearful engine of despotism. It is supposed to have been coeval with the earliest ages of the monarchy. The first instance on record is said to be that of Queen Brunehaut, who in this manner banished St. Columban, at the beginning of the seventh century. The arbitrary power thus vested in monarchy was subject to no control whatever, and exercised without any responsibility, limited only by the caprice, or the fears, or the virtue, of the reigning king. The following is the form of a *lettre de cachet*:

"M. ——. I write you this letter to acquaint you that it is my pleasure that you convey the body of ——— to the prison of ——— within ——— hours. Herein fail not. Whereupon I pray God to have you in his holy and worthy keeping."

This was signed by the king, and countersigned by a secretary of state.

band for his virtues, could not help seeing that his was a character more likely to be led than to give support, and she was not averse to exercising that ascendancy over him which he was so willing to allow her. Marie Antoinette was of a lively and amiable disposition, but, though the ambition of holding, or at least of having the appearance of holding the reins of state, had been suggested to her by the courtiers, who hoped to benefit themselves by it, she was nowise, either by education or natural capacities, suited for this task. Her mind did not incline towards the profound and grave studies which are requisite for the attainment of the science of government, and the education she had received at her mother's court was not of a nature to inspire the serious thoughts which her peculiar situation required. To please the French was her principal study—but to please them as a woman, not as a queen; to please them in their frivolity as they showed themselves at her court, not to please them in that serious character which was every day more and more developing itself without the precincts of the court. From being amused at the intrigues going on around her, she soon came to the wish of conducting them herself; but she was too good, too credulous, and of too lively a temperament to excel in an art which requires profound dissimulation, great perseverance, and coldness of heart.

As soon as Turgot became minister he hastened to re-establish the free circulation of grain between the different provinces; and while he endeavored to combat the fears of the people with regard to freedom in the external trade in corn, he deferred, for the present, passing this latter measure. The society of the *pacte de famine*, against whose machinations Turgot had flattered himself he had taken efficient means, nevertheless

produced a factitious scarcity in order to counteract his projects. The edict was attacked as if it had been the greatest imprudence to permit the French to give food to their fellow-countrymen. Riots took place in Paris and its neighborhood in the month of May, 1775, on account of the high price of corn; people, paid by the chief instigators, pillaged the markets of the capital, scattered the grain and flour along the streets and roads, and threw them into the river, and demolished the ovens and magazines of the bakers, thus doing every thing to produce the famine of which they made a pretext as the cause of their violence. These hired brigands went even so far as to annoy the king at Versailles, and the latter then gave a striking proof of the kindness of his heart and the weakness of his character, by going out upon the balcony of the palace to address the rioters, and promise them a reduction in the price of bread. It was with great difficulty that Turgot could obtain his permission to suppress these robberies by force; and from that moment the minister lost the confidence of the king. Those who conspired against him now redoubled their attacks; and when the edict for the suppression of the wardenships was presented to the parliament, they refused to enregister it. Nothing daunted, Turgot advised the king to hold a bed of justice, in which it was enregistered; but this was the last effort he obtained, for Louis was now fast giving way before the resistance he encountered, and before the remonstrances of the court and the queen, who upbraided him with degrading the royal power by all his innovations. Malesherbes, irritated by the many base obstacles which were placed in his way, quitted the ministry; but Turgot, more persevering and more courageous, waited until the king requested him to give in his resignation, in tendering which,

he said to the weak monarch : "The destiny of princes who are led by their courtiers is that of Charles I."

An event apparently insignificant, which took place at this time, contributed considerably to increase, or rather gave an opportunity to vent the growing unpopularity of the queen and the court. This was the visit of the queen's brother, Joseph II., emperor of Austria, who travelled under the simple title of the Count Falkenstein, and won the hearts of the people in part upon equality and economy, by the affability of his manners and the simplicity of his *entourage*, which served to heighten by contrast the profusion and luxury of the French court, and to render it more odious in the eyes of the people. The king's next brother, afterwards Louis XVIII., had just returned from a very expensive journey in the southern provinces of France, and the Comte d'Artois proposed to follow his example. It is said that the king, wishing to give his young brother a lesson, expressed in his presence, to the Count of Falkenstein, his surprise at seeing him travel with so small a retinue. "I have often travelled with a much smaller one," replied the son of Maria Theresa; and the king, pointing to the Comte d'Artois, said, "And there is a young gentleman who demands one hundred and fifty horses for a journey to Brest." But the Comte d'Artois nevertheless obtained what he asked for.

CHAPTER VI.

Necker—War between England and her American Colonies—Franklin—Enthusiasm in his favor—War—*Compte rendu* of Necker—His resignation—Calonne—Growing hatred of the People to the Court and the Queen—Prodigality of the Court—The Diamond Necklace—Convocation of the Notables—Ruinous state of the Finances—Dismissal of Calonne—Brienne—Contentions in the Parliament—Which is exiled to Troyes—Recalled—Duke of Orleans—Struggles between the Government and the Parliament—Convocation of the States-General.

THE murmurs which were raised at the dismissal of Turgot, would probably have ended in some violent demonstration, had he not been almost immediately succeeded by a man who possessed the confidence of the public, and had not the minds of the people been diverted by the approach of a war which was called for by public opinion. Turgot was succeeded by Clugny, whose short ministry was signalized by the introduction of lotteries and by the re-establishment of *corvées* and *maîtrises* in 1766. He was in his turn succeeded by Necker, a Genevese banker established in France, who had rapidly accumulated great wealth, and who, an adept in the art of gaining favor from all men, was generally designated as the only man who could restore the finances; but during his ministerial career he proved himself more capable of devising palliatives, than of inventing radical cures, and as long as he restricted himself to the former, he met with less resistance than his more inflexible predecessor.

The war between England and her American colonies had broken out; the latter had declared their independence. These events produced a great fermentation in Europe, but nowhere more than in France, whose philosophers saw in the legislators of America their own disciples; and enthusiasm was at its height, when Franklin, already celebrated for his invention of the lightning-

rod, arrived in Paris in 1777 to solicit succors for the new republic. The man "who had snatched the thunders from heaven, and the sceptre from the hands of tyrants," was flattered and sought by the ladies and gentlemen of the court as well as by the philosophers,* and before the second year of his mission had elapsed, it was considered impossible to deny a fleet and an army to the countrymen of Franklin. War was clamored for on all sides; the people demanded it from sympathy with the democrats, the nobles from a desire to weaken England and to wash out the disgrace of the seven years' war; the mercantile class hoped that it would open to them immense markets, and the statesmen thought it a good opportunity for the crown to regain some popularity. All were disappointed save the democrats, who subsequently found a new and powerful ally in the enthusiasm for liberal institutions, brought home by the young French officers who served as volunteers in the American war, and who never paused to consider whether the seed that sprouted so vigorously in the virgin soil of America would not have to be deluged in blood before it could germinate in the exhausted soil of France.

Though the war had not realized the expectations to which it had given rise, and least of all the financial benefits which Necker had hoped to derive from it, this minister had lost none of his influence over the king; but his restless vanity, not content with this advantage, was ever seeking the applause of the multitude, and he now proposed a plan which, of all the innovations as yet projected, approached the nearest to democratic forms, and was most calculated to whet the appetite for inquiry into

* A good distinction has been made by some English historians, in designating these so-called philosophers, and separating them as a class by adopting in English the terms *Philosophes* and *Philosophism* when speaking of them and their doctrines.

the government of the state, which was daily growing keener. This was the publication of his *Compte rendu*, i. e., the exposition of the administration of the finances during his ministry, a measure which he pretended was indispensable for the establishment of public credit, which was according to him the true secret of the financial prosperity of England. In this exposition, published in 1781, and which for the first time initiated the nation into the so long guarded mystery of the receipts and expenditure of the state, he pointed out every fault committed by his predecessors, and proudly indicated himself as the sole corrector of these faults ; but in spite of all his demonstrations to prove that he had remedied all evils, and that the revenue now exceeded the expenditure by ten millions, the truth of this statement did not seem very clear to others, and he himself soon after contradicted it when he was obliged to have recourse to Turgot's project of abolishing all immunities in matters of imposts. When this measure was proposed it no longer remained a secret, that not only was the deficit not covered, but that it amounted to forty-six millions.

By adopting Turgot's measures Necker also called to life the enmities and the perfidious intrigues which caused the fall of that minister. The court was indignant at the democratic innovations of the *Compte rendu* ; which was represented as a degradation of the royalty of France to a level with the royalty of England, and taught the queen to blush at what was termed the *roturier* tendencies of her royal consort. Necker, attacked on all sides, and but feebly supported by the king, who was intimidated by the clamors of the courtiers, tendered his resignation, (1781,) and the murmurs were then transferred from the court to the public.

At the death of Maurepas, which soon followed, the

place of prime minister was left vacant, but the power of the functionary was entirely vested in the hands of the queen, who henceforward became the sole adviser of the king, and used her influence to promote to office the chosen men of the court, entirely regardless of public opinion, that giant which was daily growing in strength, and not only growing in strength but growing in hatred to her world—the court—and to her who was its life and soul; and stamped it with the character of light-hearted prodigality, that aroused the indignation of its adversary.

Joly de Fleury, who succeeded Necker, added three hundred millions to the debts of the state, and though D'Ormesson, the next in succession, endeavored to introduce some economical measures, they were very inefficient, and when a court intrigue had supplanted him by Calonne, (1783,) a clever and audacious, but frivolous, dishonest, and despised magistrate, profusion again became the order of the day. Calonne, who owed his new post particularly to the Comte d'Artois, the protector of all the licentious and vicious nobles who so obstinately resisted all reforms, was adored by the court and by the queen, whose expensive tastes he not only did not restrict, but encouraged.* The poor king listened with the same confiding simplicity that he vouchsafed to all who approached him, to the flattering tales of this audacious deceiver, who spoke of prosperity and plenty in the midst of difficulties and want; and he enjoyed a period of calm in contemplation of the happiness that was preparing for his people. So great indeed was Calonne's art, and so sincere did he seem in his belief in the efficacy of the expedients he proposed, that even the capi-

* Calonne is said to have answered the queen, who expressed a wish but at the same time a fear that it was a matter of difficulty: "Madam, if it is but difficult it is done, if it is impossible it shall be done."

talists were beguiled, and he continued for three years making loans, anticipating the revenue, issuing money edicts, (*edits bursaux*), and imposing additional taxes with a facility which none of his predecessors had experienced.

In the mean while the people, or rather their leaders—for when do masses ever act otherwise than in following the impulses given them by those, who, while pretending to serve them, command them?—the leaders were preparing to pass from theory to practice, and the sentimental love of humanity, the rights of man, and the justice of equality, which were heard in enthusiastic expressions from all lips, were strange precursors of the bloody scenes which were to ensue, when the intellectual offspring of the eighteenth century was to preside over the destinies of France. However, this people in their love for all mankind did not include the court, and still less the young queen, who was persecuted for the faults of liveliness and thoughtlessness, with a rancor and hatred with which that same people had not visited even the dark sins of Louis XV. and his mistresses.

They saw but the profuse magnificence of the king's and the princes' households, greater even than that of the superb Louis XIV., carried on at the expense of eighty-six millions per annum, besides eighteen millions paid out in pensions. They saw the enormous debts of the Comte d'Artois, payments of which were constantly being made from the public purse, the destructively luxurious tastes of the queen, which had to be gratified, and the costly presents which were lavished on the courtiers—while they, the people, were suffering every kind of privation; and the time was gone by, when they had regarded even the brilliant faults of the court with a kind of stupid admiration. It was shown at a later date,

that the demands for ready money (*ordonnances du comptant*) amounted in eight years to eight hundred and sixty-one millions, (34,440,000*l.*)

The king did not personally participate in these prodigalities ; as simple in tastes as he was austere in morals, he was ready to make any sacrifice that merely regarded himself ; but he allowed full scope to the queen and the courtiers, and as a reward for his weakness, he did not enjoy authority even in his own court, or respect in his own family. The nobles, persuaded that they needed but a superb and majestic king like Louis XIV. to prevent a revolution, were displeased at the undignified manners and the vulgar tastes of Louis XVI. The queen, kind and benevolent, but enamored of pleasures and fêtes, wished to please everybody, and to see nothing but smiles around her, and allowed herself to be persuaded that it was incumbent upon her to govern her husband in his weakness. Eager to be adored, rather than to be respected, she compromised her dignity by a giddiness of conduct which gave rise to the most injurious reports. The most atrocious pamphlets and the most disgusting songs were written about her. She was insulted in her honor as a wife, and attacked in her friendship for the Duchess of Polignac and the Comte d'Artois, and lastly the abominable affair of the diamond necklace proved sufficiently what were the feelings of the public for the royal house. In this infamous plot the Queen of France was accused of having sold her honor to a reverend prelate of the church, the Cardinal de Rohan, for an ornament of immense value, and her name was coupled with that of a common prostitute. There is not the slightest doubt of the innocence of Marie Antoinette, yet such was public opinion with regard to her, that the parliament acquitted the Cardinal de Rohan, and

there was not a voice raised among the people in favor of the outraged honor of the royal family.

Three years had elapsed since Calonne's accession to office, and the time was at last come when he found himself bankrupt in expedients and deceptions; when he was obliged to confess to the king that the debt had increased eight hundred millions, (32,000,000*l.*;) when even he, the flatterer of all parties, could devise no other means of safety than the plan of the virtuous Turgot, with one blow to destroy all privileges. But, depending upon his own talents of persuasion to cajole the privileged classes into those concessions which his more straight-forward predecessors had failed to obtain, he advised the king to convoke an assembly of the *Notables*, (all the classes in the state enjoying the immunities of nobility.) This assembly was opened on the 22d of February, 1787, and Calonne, in a very clever speech, announced that the deficit which had not been covered by Necker, and had gone on increasing ever since, now amounted to one hundred and twelve millions, (4,480,000*l.*;) and that this state of the finances could only be remedied by radical changes in the administration. He submitted, therefore, to the consideration of the assembly, a proposal for the suppression of *corvées*, the abolition of the system of farming the finances, to be replaced by provincial assemblies, charged with the assessment of the taxes, and a land-tax denominated *subvention territoriale*, without distinction of privileges, to be substituted for the two-twentieths on income. Besides these, many other of Turgot's measures, such as free trade in corn, suppression of internal custom-duties, &c., were submitted to the assembly, and the audacious minister who dared to propose them, was looked upon by those whom he had flattered and fawned upon in vain, as a base traitor, who

was trying to save himself at their expense ; while the people, who would have received them with enthusiasm if they had been proposed by Turgot, regarded them with suspicion, as coming from so impure a source.

It was generally reported that the deficit amounted to one hundred and forty millions, (5,600,000*l.*.) instead of one hundred and twelve millions (4,480,000*l.*) as stated by the minister, and that all the difficulties were owing to the frauds and deceptions he had practised. The *Notables* gave the king to understand that the reforms would be acceded to if proposed by another, and the Comte d'Artois having abandoned his protégé, the king gave him his dismissal. He was replaced by Lomenie de Brienne, archbishop of Toulouse, an ambitious, but irresolute and incapable prelate, who had not one quality to recommend him to the post in which he was placed, but who had obtained, no one knew why, a great reputation for the manner in which he conducted the administration of his see.

The *Notables*, bound by the promise they had made previous to Calonne's dismissal, now consented to all the proposed reforms with seeming alacrity and goodwill, but secretly relying upon the opposition which the new measures would encounter in the parliament. They were not disappointed, for Brienne, instead of availing himself of the propitious moment, and presenting all the new ordinances at once to be enregistered, let time elapse, then presented them one after another, and thus allowed the parliament to concert its plan of resistance. The ordinances concerning the corn trade, the *corvées*, and the provincial assemblies, passed without difficulty ; but when the *subvention territoriale*, that great bugbear of the privileged classes, was presented, (June, 1787,) in company with an edict upon stamp duties, which was

even feared by the people, the parliament, cloaking the interestedness of its opposition to the one, under the popularity of its resistance to the other, resounded with violent declamations against the minister and the court, whose prodigality, it maintained, was the cause of all the difficulties.

The opposition was conducted by two men of opposite characters: the one, D'Espremenil, was a most violent declaimer, and nothing more than a supporter of privileges; the other, Duport, was of a calm and energetic mind, whose views extended much further than the triumph of the parliamentary aristocracy. The opposition of the parliament, though directed against measures of reform, was nevertheless popular; first, because these measures were considered inefficient, and secondly, because the people being accustomed to see in the parliament the defender of public liberties, took it for granted that it was still so, because it opposed the court; this popular approbation of parliament, acting in direct opposition to its interests, proves not only the growth of the revolutionary spirit, but its blindness.

In the heat of one of the parliamentary debates, the word *States-General* was accidentally pronounced, and from that moment it became the watchword of all parties. It seemed as if it had at once defined the vague ideas that were floating in all minds, and interests the most opposed saw in it a hope of rescue. Every order of the state had proved itself degenerate and corrupt, yet from the assemblage of this corruption it was thought new buds of hope would spring for France. The parliament was the first to avail itself of the idea suggested by the term *States-General*, and supported its refusal to enregister the new ordinances, by declaring its incompetency to impose new taxes, a right which was vested in the

States-General alone. This was tantamount to declaring, that for centuries the king and the parliament had been usurpers of the rights of the people, and was an advertisement to the latter to reclaim their rights.

The court was greatly alarmed by this declaration, and the king held a bed of justice, to force the parliament to enregister the two new taxes. The next day the parliament declared its forced compliance invalid, and was in consequence exiled to Troyes. At the same time the Comte de Provence, the king's eldest brother, was sent to the *cour des comptes* to have the edicts enregistered, and the popular approbation of this prince, who was supposed to be favorably inclined for reforms, was expressed on this occasion in the streets of Paris, by a shower of flowers, and bursts of applause, while the hatred entertained for the Comte d'Artois, sent on a similar mission to the *cour des aides*, broke out in violent aggression, and he was with difficulty rescued from the enraged mob. Following the example of the parliament, the two courts declared themselves under constraint while enregistering the edicts, and all the provincial parliaments followed the same course.

The interested motives of the parliament, which it sought to deck with a semblance of deference for the rights of the people, were not long in appearing, for it soon entered into a compromise with Brienne, and upon condition of his withdrawing the edicts most opposed to its class-interests, consented to enregister the others; but at the same time the minister promised that the States-General should be convoked at the end of five years.

The parliament returned to Paris on the 10th of September, and on the 20th a royal sitting took place, in which Brienne presented two edicts, the one relative to the creation of successive loans, amounting to four hun-

dred and twenty millions, (16,800,000*l.*;) the other restoring the civil rights of the Protestants, a tardy reparation of the revocation of the edict of Nantes, obtained by Malesherbes.

The discussions became very violent, and as the nature of the sitting (whether it was a bed of justice or merely a royal sitting) had been left undetermined, at the moment that the president proceeded to count the votes, the Duke of Orleans rose, with marks of violent agitation in his countenance, and addressing himself to the king, demanded if this assembly was a bed of justice or a free consultation? The king replied that it was a royal sitting; but when the counsellors, Fréteau, Sabatier, and D'Espremenil, had risen and declaimed with their usual violence, the king, on the impulse of the moment, transformed the sitting into a bed of justice, and forced the recording of the edicts.

This act was, however, immediately on the king's leaving the assembly, declared null and void, but the next day the two counsellors, Fréteau and Sabatier, were banished to the isles of Hières, and the Duke of Orleans to his estate of Villers-Coterets.

This duke was the great-grandson of the regent, a prince of profligate morals and weak intellect—a declared enemy of the queen—and hated and calumniated by the court party. He had, in consequence, adopted the popular cause, and to him were attributed a great many of the troubles which agitated France. He soon returned from his exile; for his pride bending before the *ennui* that he experienced, he condescended to entreat the intercession of the queen in his favor.

In the mean while the parliament made threatening representations; Brienne was not able to raise the loans; the country was in a state of great fermentation, and

the clamors for the States-General became universal ; though the king had seemed to recoil from this measure in the bed of justice which he had lately held. At this juncture the government resolved to make a bold stroke to get rid of the parliamentary opposition, and to deprive the people of every pretext for revolts, by taking itself the initiative in reform. Measures were taken, that this plan should not be known before the moment of its execution ; and sealed orders were dispatched to all the governors of the provinces to fix one day for the promulgation of the project throughout France, and to hold the army in readiness to support the royal commands. But D'Espremenil, who had, by surreptitious means, obtained possession of a copy of the projected edicts, informed the parliament in time of the thunderbolt suspended over its head. This assembly, thrown into the greatest consternation by the announcement of a plan which considerably reduced its judicial power, and altogether annihilated its political power, was, at the same time, at the greatest loss how to avail itself of its timely knowledge of the threatening dangers ; for it could not deliberate on a project which had not been laid before it, nor could it passively submit to such a blow. In this embarrassment it had recourse to an expedient which, had its full value been understood by the nation, and had it been followed by the other orders of the state, might have given a new coloring to the Revolution, which might then, indeed, have been a bright era in the history of France, and a noble example to the nations of Europe. The parliament took its stand on the "*old ways of the constitution.*" It revised and re-established, by an express act, all the constituent laws of the monarchy, which, of course, comprised its own existence and rights. By this measure the projects of government were in no way

anticipated, while they were, at the same time, completely thwarted.

On the 5th of May, 1788, the parliament of Paris declared :

“That France is a monarchy governed by a king according to the laws, and that of these laws, many which are fundamental, render sacred and inviolable—1. The right of the reigning family to the throne, descending from male to male, by order of primogeniture. 2. The right of the nation freely to grant subsidies by the organ of the States-General, regularly convoked and composed. 3. The customs and capitulations of the provinces. 4. The permanency of magistrates. 5. The right of courts to execute in every province the will of the king, and to order it to be recorded, provided it is in conformity with the constituent laws of the province, and the fundamental laws of the state. 6. The right of each citizen never to be delivered up to any other than his natural judges, who are those which the law points out. 7. The right, without which all others are useless, of every individual, on being arrested, to demand trial *without delay*. This protest is directed against every attempt which may be made against the above principles.”

To this energetic measure the ministry replied by the arrest of D'Espremenil and another counsellor, which took place in the midst of the assembled parliament, where they had sought refuge. The officer sent to arrest them, not knowing them, called upon them to present themselves. This appeal was at first received with profound silence; afterwards all the magistrates, with one voice, declared themselves to be D'Espremenils. After a third summons, however, the latter gave himself into the custody of the officer, and was carried off amidst the tumult of the populace. Three days after,

(May 8th,) the princes, the peers, and the magistrates, were convoked at Versailles, where the king held a bed of justice, in which he explained his views as to the reforms required, and made all the concessions of which he was capable. "There is not an extravagance," said the king, "of which my parliament has not been guilty within the last year. . . . I owe it to my subjects, to myself, and to my successors, to arrest them. . . . A great state must have but one king, one law, one recording; its tribunals must not have too extended a jurisdiction; it must have parliaments for which the most important causes must be reserved; one sole court must be the depository of its laws, and be charged with recording them; and, lastly, the States-General must be assembled whenever the necessities of the state make it urgent. Such is the restoration which my love for my subjects has prepared for them." The chancellor then read the ordinances bearing upon the proposed reforms, and by which the *chambres des requêtes et des enquêtes* (courts of petitions and of inquiry) were suppressed, and the jurisdiction of the parliaments limited by the creation of inferior tribunals. The *tribunaux d'exception* were abolished, the criminal laws reformed, and lastly a *cour plénière* (plenary court) was created, to consist of all the lords, the bishops, the counsellors of the state, and the members of the great chamber of the parliament of Paris, and which alone was to be charged with the recording of the laws.

But all these reforms, though good in themselves, no longer satisfied public opinion, which, growing more inordinate in its desires the more it was fed by royal concessions, seemed now to have arrived at the point where excitement, not any definite object, is the thing craved for. Besides, the States-General were now up-

permost in all minds, to them turned all hopes; the reforms were, therefore, received with universal disapprobation, and the parliament which, during the royal sitting, had, by deep silence, expressed its opposition, assembled the next day at a tavern at Versailles, regularly to enter its protest against the proceedings and the proposed measures. Nor were the provincial parliaments more submissive. Except that of Douai, all refused to enregister the royal edict, and the parliament of Rheims even went so far as to declare all those infamous who should accept a seat in the *cour plénière*. In consequence, many of those whom the king had most relied upon refused to do so. In several of the provinces the most active measures were taken to resist the king's orders; and when the soldiers were called out to coerce the refractory burghers, it was found that the troops were not more to be depended upon than the citizens. Even the clergy added its reprobation to the universal discontent, and protested, in a general assembly, against the acts of the minister, and demanded the speedy convocation of the States-General. In fine, to complete the general discontent, the *pacte de famine*, which Necker had been unable to dissolve, but which had been kept in restraint by the character of the king, availing itself of the edict which for the fourth time abolished all restrictions on the corn-trade, recommenced its infamous machinations, and excited the populace to fury.

Brienne having tried in vain every expedient which had been suggested to him, and finding himself at last without the support of the ancient institutions of the realm, while the scheme of his new-invented *cour plénière* had proved abortive, now also began to look to the States-General for relief, and they were accordingly convoked for the 5th of May, 1789.

CHAPTER VII.

The States General—Ruinous Financial Measures of Brienne—His Resignation—Necker—His Popularity—Discussions on the Formation, &c., of the States-General—Misery of the People—Commotions—Opening of the States-General—Dissensions between the Three Estates—National Assembly—Royal Sitting—General Revolutionary Agitation.

As more than a century and a half had elapsed since the assembly of the States-General had been held, and as there had been so little appreciation of the value of this institution, that no records were left as to its constitutions, its forms, and its functions, the minister, desiring to make himself popular, appealed to the "thinkers" among the nation to draw up memorials upon the composition and the attributes of the coming assembly, thus engrafting upon the *name* of a time-honored institution a speculative theory, the offspring of a period of destruction. But the 5th May was yet distant, and the minister was without money. The king's strong-box at Versailles contained no more than two thousand louis d'ors, though the Archbishop's sacrilegious hand had been laid even upon the money which the charitable public of Paris had contributed to the relief of the poor, who had suffered from the dreadful hailstorms that had lately ravaged France. New means must be devised, and Brienne, perplexed and powerless, proposed to call Necker to his aid; but the latter wisely refused to associate himself with a minister who had incurred so much odium. The Archbishop, left to his own resources, issued paper money to bear interest, and to be redeemed with specie next year. He published a proclamation, (16th August, 1788,) declaring that all payments at the royal treasury should henceforth be made three-fifths in specie, and the rest in paper. Public indignation was at its height, and the minister, having ensured to himself and his

family all the advantages he could hope for, thought it advisable to resign, strenuously advising the king to let Necker be his successor.

Necker was reinstated in office the very day that Brienne resigned, and the people manifested their delight at a change which they looked upon as a triumph over the court, by riotous assemblies, in which the retiring minister was burnt in effigy, while the portrait of his successor was paraded through the streets stuck upon a pole. During three days, blood flowed in the streets of Paris—ominous drops from the ocean which was soon to inundate France.

Intoxicated by the incense which was everywhere offered to him, Necker, on resuming office, thought himself, as others thought him, destined to be the saviour of France ; but the endeavors of a mere financier, were he ever so clever, could no more suffice to right the state of France : it was too late. Before he could take measures to prevent the exportation of corn, the *pacte de famine* had bought up all the corn, and produced a scarcity, the effects of which were the more fearful, on account of the harvest of 1788 having been a very bad one. The minister was obliged to sacrifice forty millions to stop the rise in the price of corn, and having revoked the edicts of Brienne, and recalled the parliament, he exerted every means to carry on the government until the opening of the States-General. This was the theme of all conversations, the subject of every thought. Newspapers and pamphlets were filled with discussions on their constitution ; and the philosophers, the economists, or by whatever name the unruly heads of that day were denominated, were in agitation day and night, at the clubs which had been formed after the fashion of England, deliberating upon the two important

questions : whether the third estate was not to be represented by a greater number of deputies than the nobles or the clergy, and whether the votes were to be taken by order or by head. The Abbé Sièyes, one of the most enthusiastic believers in the new creeds of the philosophers of France, and himself the founder of one, wrote a pamphlet, with the title, *What is the Third Estate?* and answered his own query, by saying it was *every thing*. And this answer, which was responded to throughout France, may be said to contain the history of the coming revolution. It is the confession of faith of men preparing to regenerate an ancient monarchy, by the overthrow of every thing existing whence regeneration might spring—of men destroying the past, where, though buried under the ashes of centuries of abuse, still glimmered the vital spark that had given birth to the nation, and lent it power to grow ; and then calling upon the nation, in whom they had destroyed all divine thoughts, to rear a fabric of wisdom and liberty, with the aid of the creeds they had substituted for all that until then had been held sacred.

In a well-regulated state, there is no one class to be *every thing*. There is a *people* consisting of *all* classes to be good and happy ; that this can be as little possible (even less) when the lower classes are all powerful, than when the upper ones are so, no event in history has more clearly proved than this self-same French Revolution. Undue power in the higher classes will produce despotism and oppression, but it will always maintain some kind of government, which is certainly preferable to none. Undue power possessed by the lower classes invariably produces anarchy, that worst of all despotisms, because it is one from which they are not even themselves exempt.

The people, of course, raised its voice to demand the double representation of the third estate, and the vote by head, maintaining that, in the contrary case, every reform would be met by a coalition of the two privileged orders; and the latter taking the alarm, had again recourse to the support of the parliament, which, frightened at the danger it had itself called forth, threw off its mask, and manifested clearly its aristocratic tendencies, by demanding that the forms of 1614 should be adopted. From this moment its popularity was lost, but the people did not profit by the lesson which their misconception of the character of the parliament might have taught them. Necker, who was an admirer of the English constitution, and who flattered himself that he should be able, in a great measure, to conduct the Revolution, was determined upon giving the third estate a double representation; but whether it were in the hope of engaging the privileged classes to submit to the reforms, or from a desire to render them still more unpopular, he convoked an assembly of the *Notables*, to give their opinion as to the composition of the States-General. Of the six bureaux into which this assembly was divided, one only voted for the double representation of the third estate; but the king, "in accordance with the wishes of the minority of the *Notables*, with the demands of the provincial assemblies, and with the advice of the innumerable addresses presented to him on this occasion," ordered that the number of deputies should not be less than one thousand; that they should be elected from all the bailiwicks of the kingdom; and that the number of the deputies of the third class should be equal to that of the two first ranks joined together; but whether the votes were to be collected individually, or by order, was left to the assembly itself to de-

termine, and thus the seeds of discord were sown in advance.

The royal declaration was received with universal enthusiasm, and the elections were immediately commenced, according to the regulations laid down by the government. All Frenchmen above the age of twenty-five, and who were subjected to the poll-tax, elected two deputies out of every hundred inhabitants present at the election, to represent them at the election of the bailiwick: and these deputies in their turn elected delegates to the States-General. As for the clergy and the nobility, the individuals possessing benefices or fiefs elected their own deputies; and the others elected one *mandatory* for every ten, who again chose the deputies for the States-General.

The elections were everywhere animated, but nowhere broke out into open tumult except in the *pays des états*, where the local liberties gave a last sign of their existence, and the provincial assemblies struggled hard for the power of choosing from their own members their deputies for the States-General. In Brittany, where the nobles most strenuously opposed the pretensions of the *tiers états*, differences between them and the *bourgeois* broke out into open violence, and the whole province associated itself with the neighboring provinces against the "fanatic aristocrats." In Provence the Comte de Mirabeau, a man of low morals but great intellectual ability, having been repelled by the nobles, offered the advantages of his eloquence to the *tiers*. He was carried in triumph through all the towns, and became the leader of the minority of the privileged classes that joined cause with the commons.

In Paris the elections were disturbed by a riot in the faubourg St. Antoine, got up by the workmen in a pa-

per manufactory, under pretence of taking revenge on their master, who wanted to reduce their wages. Re-veillon, the manufacturer, was burnt in effigy, his house pillaged and burnt, and so great was the resistance when the military were sent out to coerce the mob, that no less than six hundred persons were killed in this miserable affray. Every thing seemed to conspire to lead the unhappy people into riot and tumult; their misery was at its height; commerce and industry were paralyzed by the poverty of the finances; the storm lowering on the horizon made the capitalists wary; the *pacte de famine* continued its abominable speculations, and, to crown all, the winter of 1789 was as rigorous as that of 1709. From all sides came accounts of disturbances caused by actual starvation. The country resounded with cries of hatred and fury against the nobles and the monopolizers. The large towns, and principally Paris, were invaded by bands of hideous, savage-looking, audacious creatures, who seemed rather to be inspired by hatred, than by a wish of gain, and who contaminated the better-intentioned classes of their fellow-sufferers with their love of disorder and bloodshed. The higher classes of society, turning away from the true causes of these fearful and evil-boding apparitions, because they were not inclined to profit by the lessons which they held out to them, attributed them to all kinds of extraneous causes, among which the gold of the Duke of Orleans and the ministry of England were the most conspicuous.

In the mean while the instructions of the constituents of the different orders to their representatives were drawn up, and by the diversity of their character showed what would be the nature of the coming contest. Undoubtedly all one's sympathies at this the outset of the Revolution go with the popular party, who, however

confused and vague in their ideas, were nevertheless the spokesmen of a suffering and oppressed multitude, and who really at this juncture seemed regenerated by the great thoughts that animated them, while the nobles seemed unable to rise above the narrowest class-interests, unwilling to make any the slightest concessions, and even showing themselves hostile to the clergy. As for the latter, the part they played seems the most difficult to pronounce upon. Every order in the state must of necessity have become degenerate before a nation can present such a spectacle as that held up by the French during this revolution; and there can be no doubt that the Church, the institution which above all others has to watch over national morals, must have neglected its duties, and itself degraded its sacred character, before the people could arrive at such a stage of corruption as to dare to set at naught law and right, and openly to declare its contempt for all that has ever been held most sacred among nations. There is no doubt that had there been one order in France which had been content to maintain its own imprescriptible rights, and had had within it the mental strength and honesty to resist all encroachment, it would have formed a moral support to, and even a moral regenerator of the other orders. Whatever may have been the faults of the French clergy, however, they cannot be blamed for their resistance to the *tiers état*; for being aware of the innovating tendencies of the times, they must have felt that the sacred precincts once invaded by the new apostles of the "rights of man," it would be impossible to stop the torrent, which in sweeping away the time-honored edifice would tear asunder every sacred bond, and that religion and morality would be buried in the same grave, as the ancient constitution of the Church and the State.

The period for the opening of the States-General had arrived. On the preceding day, the 4th May, the king, accompanied by the three orders and all the dignitaries of the state, went in solemn procession to the cathedral of Nôtre Dame, where neither pomp nor magnificence was spared, to render imposing a ceremony in which a whole nation assembled at the foot of the altar to offer up prayers for its own safety in the crisis which was approaching; and notwithstanding the unworthy scenes which followed this solemn moment, we can scarcely doubt the correctness of the accounts, that the purest patriotism on that day animated all hearts, and that for a moment all hatreds were forgotten. But, alas! nations cannot be regenerated by momentary impulses, and centuries of sin must at last bring their own punishment.

On the 5th May, 1789, the session of the States-General was opened at Versailles. The king and queen took their seats on an elevated throne, the court in the galleries, while the two superior orders were ranged on both sides of the royal throne, and the third estate occupied the seats at the extremity of the room. So far, nothing was altered in the ancient etiquette of these assemblies; but when the king by covering his head gave the signal for the nobles and clergy to do the same, it immediately became evident that the humble places of the individuals at the extremity of the room were no wise in accordance with the feelings that animated them; for, contrary to ancient usage, the *tiers état* followed the example of the privileged classes, and placed their hats on their heads. The king pronounced a speech, which, though containing expressions of the most benevolent feelings towards his people, did not touch in a decided manner upon the contemplated reforms, and must therefore have been a great disappointment to those

who had gone so far in their enthusiasm and hopes, as to have dreamed of even the king's abdicating his throne, in order to receive it again from the hands of the nation.

Necker in his turn made a long and fatiguing speech on the state of the finances, which, however important it might have been, was far from satisfactory to those who, in their impatience to embody their own wisdom in the new constitution they were planning for France, had never condescended to inquire whether the liberty and prosperity of a people are not in as great a measure dependent upon the administrative system of the state, as upon its constitutional forms.

The next day each order of the deputies assembled in the separate chambers assigned to them, there to proceed to the verification of powers, and a discussion immediately arose as to whether this was to be a general or a separate transaction, effected by each order independent of the others. This question of mere form was invested with an undue degree of importance, because under it was hidden the much graver one, whether the states were to deliberate and vote by order or in a general assembly.

The *tiers état*, which, on account of their numbers, occupied the chamber appropriated to the general assembly, did not neglect this first opportunity of putting forward their pretensions, and sent a deputation to the two other orders, to let them know that they were awaiting their arrival to proceed to the verification of powers. The nobles immediately replied, that the three orders forming distinct assemblies, they should of course proceed to verify separately the powers of their deputies, and they acted accordingly; the clergy, however, among whom were comprised a great number of country curates, whose sympathies were all with

the *tiers état*, did not give a decided refusal, but proposed that commissioners should be appointed to obviate the difficulties. The proposal was acceded to, and the two first orders declared, in these conferences, that they would renounce their privileges in matters of taxation, but that they would persist in refusing to vote by head. The *tiers* accepted the concession, but on their side obstinately refused to submit to separate verifications and deliberations. The conferences still remained open: as a new method of adjustment, it was proposed that the powers of the whole states should be confirmed by commissioners elected from the three orders.

The nobility, whose resistance was said to be instigated by the queen and the Comte d'Artois, again refused to consent; and on the same day declared, that, for the present session, they insisted on the separate verifications, but that for the future, the question could be decided by the states. This took place on the 27th of May; thus twenty-two days had passed in useless discussion within the assembly, while, without, excitement was daily increasing. The *Salle des Menus Plaisirs*, occupied by the *tiers*, was daily visited by crowds of people, who mixed among the deputies, were probably inspired by them, and then disseminated among the people the accounts they had there received. The clubs, both at Paris and Versailles, where the deputies assembled in the evening, became more and more animated. The gardens of the Palais Royal were crowded every night with people, murmuring, and cursing the aristocrats and the priests. The philosophy of the Revolution, which the Abbé Maury (one of the deputies of the clergy) described in the words, "*Ote-toi que je m'y mets*," (Get out of the way that I may get into your place,) was beginning to declare itself openly in the streets, though

in the chambers of the States-General it still retained its mask of patriotism.

The time that had elapsed had been profitably employed out of the chamber, and the *tiers état* now determined upon taking more decisive measures within. On the day of the above-mentioned declaration from the nobility, Mirabeau having now become the leader of the popular party, who were not over-scrupulous as to the private character of the men they followed, proposed that the clergy should be called upon for the last time to explain themselves, and to join the *tiers état*, which now chose to style itself the Commons, though, as to the character, the position, and the principles of the majority of its members, it might with more truth have been styled the Rabble. A deputation, headed by Target, was sent in consequence to the clergy, to invite them, "in the name of the God of peace, and the national interests," to join the deputies of the people in the common hall, to consult on the best means of re-establishing that concord which was so necessary for the safety of public affairs.

The clergy were partly inclined to cede, but at last it was determined to avoid a decision until an appeal could be made to the king. His majesty reopened the conferences by a plan for conciliation, which was adopted by the clergy but rejected by the nobles. The commons continued studiously to avoid every step which could be considered as binding them to proceed as a separate chamber, and acted with a firmness and resolution, which would call forth all our admiration had it been shown in a struggle for legitimate, not for illegitimate power, and did the sequel allow us to believe that they really had the interests of the people as much at heart, as they had them on their lips. Still it is with diffidence

that one pronounces upon the intentions of men, who had had their minds so confused by the philosophic tenets of their times, who had been so bewildered by doctrines "on the rights of man," that they may really have been led to forget, that a part of the rights of individual, isolated man must be sacrificed, when he wishes to enjoy the benefits of society; and they may really have been sincerely working for the establishment of these rights, by undermining the society to which they belonged. But whatever may have been their intentions, their acts bequeathed misery and crimes unparalleled, to those masses who were looking up to them with unlimited confidence. It is when reflecting upon this misery and these crimes, produced by the acts of those who, with presumptuous audacity, took upon themselves to despise every safeguard of the common welfare which the past history of their country offered, and to create, at one stroke, a constitution which should answer every exigency of the times, that we almost forget the more passive faults of the other orders of the state, while the whole weight of our indignation falls upon these self-sufficient law-breakers and constitution-makers.

The alarm of the court increased; Paris was in violent agitation—the aristocracy were accused of trying to destroy the States-General; the scarcity of provisions augmented; bands of starving wretches, known in the history of these times under the name of brigands, roved about the country, burning and pillaging the huts of the poor as well as the palaces of the wealthy. Those who had all their lives been at war with law, had an instinctive foreboding that their great oppressor was to be crushed, and gave earnest of how they intended to use their liberty. Those on the other side who had something to lose, began to league themselves together, not

only to preserve their property, but also to defend their deputies, little thinking that it was these very deputies who were undermining the edifice, and letting loose those evils from which they already began to suffer.

The moment was decisive for the *tiers états*. The propositions made to them were such as they could not refuse upon any plausible pretext, and to avoid accepting, the first revolutionary step must be taken. Upon the 12th June, it was resolved that the two orders should, for the last time, be invited individually, as well as collectively, to join the commons, to assist, to concur in, and to submit to the verification of powers in common. At the same time, an address was sent to the king, to announce the resolution to which the commons had come. The two orders replied that they must deliberate, and the king, that he would make known his intentions; according to the concerted plan, the commons awaited neither, but proceeded to the calling over the bailiwicks, and the verification of the powers of those that were absent, as of those that were present, during which time they were joined by three curates, delegates from Poitou, and members of the assembly of the clergy. The next day six more were added to the number, and the triumph of the popular party began.

When the verification of the powers was concluded, the assembly, anxious to break with the past, rejected the name of the States-General, which must indeed to them have been a burdensome restraint, and a discussion arose as to what name they should assume. Mirabeau proposed that of representatives of the French people, Mounier, deputy of Grenoble, that of the majority deliberating in the absence of the minority; the deputy Legrand, that of the National Assembly, which latter was finally adopted, after a discussion that lasted till

midnight. On the next day (17th June) the proposition was put to the vote, and adopted by a majority of four hundred and ninety-one against ninety, and the commons declared themselves constituted a National Assembly, in a document drawn up by Abbé Sièyes.

“The assembly deliberating after the verification of its powers, declares that it is composed of representatives chosen by ninety-six hundredths at least of the nation. Such a mass of deputation cannot remain inactive on account of the absence of the deputies of some bailiwicks, or of some class of the citizens; for the absentees, who have been summoned, cannot hinder those present from exercising the plentitude of their rights, especially when the exercise of these rights is an imperious and pressing duty.

“Further, since it only belongs to representatives whose powers have been verified, to fulfil the national will, and that all the verified representatives ought to be in this assembly, it must of necessity be concluded, that to it, it belongs, and to none but it, to interpret and represent the general will of the nation.

“There cannot exist between the throne and this assembly any *veto*, or negative power.

“The national assembly declares, then, that the general business of national redress can and ought to be begun without delay by the deputies present, and that they ought to pursue it without any interruption or obstacle.

“The denomination of National Assembly is the only one which suits the assembly in the actual state of things: first, because the members who compose it, are the only representatives legitimately and publicly known and verified; secondly, because they are deputed by nearly the whole of the nation; and lastly, because representation being one and indivisible, no deputy, in whatever order

or class he may be chosen, has a right to exercise his powers separately from this assembly.

“The assembly will never lose the hope of uniting in its bosom all the deputies at present absent. It will never cease to call upon them to fulfil the obligation which is imposed upon them, of joining the assembly of the States-General. At whatever moment in the session which is about to open, the absent members may present themselves, the assembly declares beforehand, that it will with alacrity receive them, and cordially co-operate with them in their efforts to regenerate the kingdom.”

Immediately after this resolution was passed, an address was voted to the king and to the nation, and all the members took a solemn oath “to execute with zeal and fidelity, the functions with which they were charged,” and then to give a proof of its power, as well as from a desire not to impede the march of administration, it legalized the existing taxes, though established without the consent of the nation, and decided that they should continue for the present to be raised in the usual manner, except in the case that the assembly should be dissolved; it placed the debts of the state “under the safeguard of the honor of the nation.” Finally, it announced that it would immediately proceed to examine into the causes of the existing scarcity, and of the public suffering.

The court, stupified at the evidence of so much firmness and audacity, was thrown into a state of still greater consternation the next day, on learning that the clergy, after a tumultuous deliberation, in which a majority of one hundred and forty-nine, composed of the curates, had carried it over a minority of one hundred and fifteen, had joined the commons.

The nobles, the parliament, the princes of the blood, and the queen, all joined in endeavors to make the king

feel in all its threatening dangerousness, the usurpation of the *tiers état*, and Necker advised to put a stop to its illegal proceedings by a royal sitting, in which the king should make all the concessions which were demanded, and should himself order the union of the three estates into one single assembly.

Strange, that already at this early stage, Louis XVI. should have been advised to present that extraordinary anomaly : a king legalizing a revolution, the evident tendency of which was to subvert the constitution, in virtue of which he held the power that he was thus advised to prostrate. There seems not even among the men devoted to royalty, to have been one who understood, that the sanctity of law and the sanctity of royalty are indissolubly connected, and that when the one is violated, the other must fall.

The court supported the proposal of Necker, and it was determined that a bold and decisive step should be taken. In the mean while measures were resorted to, in order to prevent the meeting of the assembly, until the royal sitting should take place, which greatly exasperated the public mind, and led to further revolutionary proceedings.

On the 20th of June, the very day appointed for the union of the clergy with the commons, and without any previous notice to the assembly, except a verbal message to its president, Bailly, a placard was stuck on the great door of the assembly-room, announcing that the States-General could not meet on that or on the two following days, on account of the preparations to be made for the royal sitting, which his majesty intended to hold on the 23d.

Nothing exceeded the astonishment and indignation of the deputies, when they presented themselves at the

door of their assembly-room, and found it shut against them ; many proposed forcing the entrance in spite of the soldiers who guarded it, but upon their being joined by Bailly, they had recourse to less violent means. The president placing himself at the head of the deputies, demanded admittance, which being refused by the officer on guard, in virtue of a royal order which he produced, the president called upon those present to witness, that he protested in the name of the National Assembly against this refusal of admittance ; after which, the deputies, whose number amounted to almost six hundred, assembled in a noisy and discontented group in the "avenue de Paris," which affords a view of the palace of Versailles, at the windows of which, it is said, the courtiers were observed watching and laughing at the disconsolate legislators, shivering in the cold and drizzling rain.

But the *tiers état*, nothing daunted, was determined upon holding its sitting, and was merely deliberating upon where it should take place. Some proposed following the king to Marly, whither he had retired ; others wished to hold their assembly on the plain before the palace windows ; but at last some one named the Tennis Court (*Jeu de Paume*) close by in the Rue St. François ; and braving the perils of thus forming into an assembly, which more able authorities would have dispersed by force, the deputies repaired to this hall, which was immediately surrounded by the populace, who sympathized most ardently with all that was going on. Mounier opened the session with a speech, in which he said, "Wounded in our rights and in our dignity—acquainted with the vivacity of the intrigues, and with the violence of the animosity by which the king is forced on to take disastrous measures, it is our duty to bind ourselves by

a solemn oath, not to desert the cause of the public welfare and the national interests." In consequence hereof, the president Bailly, mounting upon a table, pronounced the following oath: "We swear never to desert the national assembly, and to assemble whenever circumstances render it necessary, until the constitution of the state is framed and based upon solid foundations." Every arm was raised, and an enthusiastic "We swear," burst from all lips, whilst the populace without responded to the shout.

The court, thrown into new alarm and anxiety by these extraordinary proceedings, closed this new assembly-room by hiring the Tennis Court for its own diversions; the persevering deputies were not thereby prevented from acting in accordance with their oath, and again assembled on the 22d of June, in the church of St. Louis, where they were joined by one hundred and forty-eight members of the clergy, and two of the nobility, and they adjourned till the next day, the one appointed for the royal sitting, full of anxiety as to what it was to bring.

The military, who were marshalled in great array on the 23d of May, proved what were the feelings of the court towards the assembly, and the deep silence in which the people contemplated the pomp of the royal *cortège*, proved what were the feelings of the people towards the court.

It had been intimated to the commons on the previous day, that no discussions would be allowed on the morrow, and the exasperation occasioned by the breach of the usual parliamentary forms, according to which a royal sitting admitted full liberty of discussion, was farther aggravated, when on the day of the royal sitting they were kept for half an hour in the rain without the side

door, through which they were to be admitted, under the pretence that it was yet too early. When at last their impatience grew so violent, that it was considered dangerous to put it to a farther test, and they were admitted, they found the court and the two other orders already seated. It has been said in excuse of the court, that they had had recourse to this pitiful and paltry expedient to prevent the quarrels that would most likely have arisen, during the scuffle for places ; but even if this be really so, one cannot but regret that the king should have had such injudicious advisers, and that he himself should not have been aware, that wounded self-esteem is an unquiet and revengeful feeling.

The king, in opening the sitting, spoke with unusual severity, but his weakness was already too well known for this semblance of firmness to produce any effect. "It is my command," said he, "that the distinction between the three orders of the state be not infringed ; the deputies forming three chambers, and deliberating separately, except when with the royal sanction they shall deliberate in common, can alone be considered as forming a body representing the nation. Wherefore I declare null and void the resolutions adopted by the *tiers état*, as being illegal and unconstitutional." He further prohibited them from occupying themselves with questions relative to the ancient and constituent rights of the three orders, the form of the constitution of the state, feudal and seigniorial rights and property, &c. &c. ; and lastly, he submitted to their examination, and adopted in advance, the following innovations ; taxes and loans to be submitted to the consent of the representatives of the nation ; the budget to be published ; abolition of all immunities with regard to taxation, individual liberty to be established, as well as liberty of the press ; the estab-

ishment of provincial assemblies, the abolition of *corvées*, internal customs, duties, &c. The king added, "I can with truth say, that never has any monarch done so much for any nation." But commands and concessions both came too late—too late for the former to be obeyed—too late for the latter to be appreciated. When a people has arrived at the point that it can force its governors into concessions, it is but little inclined to be grateful when they are made.

When the king left the assembly, after having commanded it to resume its sittings next day, according to the regulations he had laid down, he was followed by the nobles and a part of the clergy, but the commons, who, during the whole sitting, had maintained a deep and evil-boding silence, retained their places, interchanging looks of the utmost astonishment. At length Mirabeau rising addressed them as follows: "Gentlemen, I confess that what we have just heard might be the saving of our country. were not the presence of despotism always dangerous. What means this insulting dictatorship? What means this display of arms, this violation of the national temple, in order to render you happy? Who is it that has given you these commands? Your functionary? Who is it that issues imperious laws? Your functionary? He who ought to receive them from us, who constitute a political priesthood, which must not be violated; from us, in fine, from whom twenty-five millions of men expect certain happiness, because it will, by universal consent, be given and received by all! I call upon you to exert your dignity and your legislative power, and to call to mind the religious obligations of your oath, which will not suffer you to separate until the constitution is made and established." The grand master of the ceremonies here entered

to reiterate the king's orders to adjourn, and was replied to by Mirabeau, "Go tell your master that we are here by the power of the people, and will not be driven hence but by the power of the bayonet." The whole assembly shouted their concurrence, and Sièyes rising said, "We have sworn, and our oath shall not be a vain one, we have sworn to re-establish the rights of the people. The authorities which have appointed us for this great undertaking, demand a constitution. Who can make one without us? Who can make one if it be not us? Gentlemen, you are to-day what you were yesterday." Upon which the assembly unanimously declared that it persisted in the resolutions already taken, and decreed the inviolability of its members.

In the mean while the court, ignorant of what was passing in the assembly, was congratulating itself upon the probable effect of its vigorous measures; and it is said the queen, unhappily abandoning herself to a blind confidence, in her joy held up her son in her arms, presenting him to her devoted servants, who were expressing their satisfaction at the triumphs gained over her factious subjects, when the happy dreams in which they were indulging, were dispelled by the shouts of the populace thanking Necker for having absented himself from the royal sitting.

A contemporary has well described the state of the country at this period, and the effect produced by the acts of the court, in the following words; "It would be impossible to describe the shuddering that came over me, at the bare mention of the words, 'The king has annulled every thing.' I felt the secret fire burning under my feet; it needed but one word, and civil war would have burst over the land." The public sympathy with, and the approbation of, the acts of the National

Assembly, were expressed in addresses that poured in from all parts of the country, among which was one from the rabble of the Palais Royal, ominous of the heavings of society that were throwing up the mud from the bottom to the surface. A complete system of committees of correspondence had already been organized all over the country, to convey the electric shock from the assembly to its remotest parts ; but lest these means should not be sufficient to spread the revolutionary doctrines, the clubs also had their committees of insurrection. These clubs had become so excited, that the Abbé Sièyes himself declared that he could no longer frequent them, because “ they proposed crimes as expedients.”

France was inundated with papers and pamphlets advocating the most extreme measures. Whoever dared to hold a middle course, and preach moderation, was denounced as an aristocrat and a traitor.

CHAPTER VIII.

Deliberations of the National Assembly—Constitution of France—General Agitation—Disaffection of the Soldiers—Dismissal of Necker—Outbursts of the Revolutionists in consequence—Paris in the hands of the Mob—Taking of the Bastille—Dreadful Cruelties—The Assembly and the king—Mirabeau's Speech—Reconciliation between the King and the Assembly—Deputation of Members to Paris—The King goes to Paris—Returns to Versailles—Murder of M. de Foulon and his Son-in-law—Emigration.

ON the 24th of June, the court took no further measures to prevent the meeting of the assembly than sending in carpenters and other workmen, escorted by a few soldiers, to demolish the temporary galleries that had been raised for the ceremony of the preceding day ; but

the deputies continued their deliberations, in spite of hammering and noise, and were joined by the majority of the clergy and the minority of the nobles, who, having endeavored in vain to influence the rest of their party, had at last decided upon separating from them; and two days after, the king, alarmed at the growing audacity of the mob, himself invited the rest of the two orders to join the assembly, but though they ceded to the royal entreaties, they did not fail to behave so as to intimate their protest against the legality of the assembly in its present form.

However, the deliberations upon the constitution to be given to the kingdom went on, and the necessity for such a step was always supported by the absurd assertion, that France (a monarchy that had stood for fourteen centuries) had no constitution, an assertion that proves more than any thing else how vague must have been the ideas of the assembly upon such subjects,* and M. Lally

* M. Thiers, one of the inheritors of the principles and statesmanship of those days, says, in a note to his *History of the French Revolution*, "The question, as to whether she had or had not a constitution, seems to me to be one of the most important of the Revolution, for it is only the absence of fundamental laws, that can justify our undertaking to frame them." And M. Thiers then quotes, as his authority for maintaining that France had no constitution, a speech of M. Lally Tollendal in the National Assembly. Let us see, however, if other and more competent judges have not asserted the reverse, and if M. Thiers, in the above-quoted passage, has not pronounced the condemnation of the legislative labors of the National Assembly. In 1795, several members of the ancient magistracy of France drew up a work under the title of *Development of the Fundamental Principles of the French Monarchy*, in which they state that "the constitution attributes to the king the legislative power. From him emanate all laws: he has the right to administer justice himself, or to have it administered by his officers; the right of pardon, and of granting all privileges and recompenses; of appointing to the offices of the state, and of conferring nobility; of convoking and of dissolving national assemblies, whenever he in his wisdom shall judge it convenient. The king has, moreover, the right of making war and peace, and of assembling the armies," (p. 28.) "The king only governs by the laws, and is not invested with the power of doing every thing that his appetites may suggest," (p. 364.) "There are laws which the kings themselves have declared themselves happily unable to break. These are the *statutes of the*

Tollendal, one of the members of the minority of the nobles that had first joined the *Tiers*, lived to see and to deplore the consequences of his sincere but injudicious zeal for the welfare of the people.

In the mean while, the court drew together troops from all sides; 40,000 men were stationed about Paris and Versailles, but the courtiers, with their usual carelessness, took all their measures as publicly as possible,

realm, distinguished from the laws of circumstances, or the laws not having reference to the constitution, which are denominated *the king's laws*," (p. 29.) "The kings, as supreme legislators, have always, in promulgating their laws, spoken in the affirmative. There is, however, a consent of the people; but a consent which is merely the expression of the wishes, the gratitude, and the acceptance of the people," (p. 271.) "The nation is represented by three orders, divided into three chambers, and deliberating separately: the result of the deliberations, if unanimous, present the resolutions of the States-General," (p. 332.) "The laws of the realm cannot be passed except in a general assembly of the whole kingdom, and with the concurrence of the three orders of the state. The king cannot derogate these laws, and, if he dares to violate them, all that he does may be annulled by his successor," (pp. 292 and 293.) "The necessity of the consent of the nation to the imposition of taxes, is an incontestable truth, and is recognised as such by the kings," (p. 302.) "The resolutions of the two orders cannot be considered binding to the third, unless by its own consent," (p. 302.) "The consent of the States-General is necessary for the validity of every perpetual alienation of the domains," (p. 303.) And the same watchfulness is recommended to them, in order to prevent any partial dismemberment of the realm. "Justice is administered in the king's name by magistrates, who are to examine the laws, and to see that they are not in opposition to the fundamental statutes of the kingdom," (p. 345.) "A part of the duty of these magistrates is to resist the sovereign when he is in error," (p. 345.) "The military power must not interfere with the civil administration. The governors of provinces have no command, save in what concerns the armed force, which they may make use of against the enemies of the state, but not against the citizens, who are subjected to the tribunals of the state," (p. 364.) "The magistrates are unremovable, and their important offices cannot be considered vacated except by the death of the occupant, by his voluntary resignation, or by legal forfeiture," (p. 356.) "In causes that concern the king, he is obliged to plead before his tribunals against his people," (p. 367.) A profound writer, commenting on this work, says, "If it be remarked that these excellent laws were not executed, in that case it was the fault of the French people, and there is no more hope of liberty for them: for, when a people does not know how to avail itself of its existing fundamental laws, it is useless for it to seek for others,—it is a sign that it is not made for liberty, or that it is irredeemably corrupt."—DE MAISTRE, *Considérations sur la France*, p. 107.

and acted without any fixed plan, so that their array of troops served more to betray their weakness than to ensure the safety of their party. The capital was in a state of the most dreadful fermentation, in consequence of the alarming reports that were spread as to the intentions of the court. It was said that the king was going to dissolve the National Assembly, to declare a national bankruptcy, to reduce the town by famine, &c. &c.; and the citizens, as well as the populace, were preparing not only to counteract these projects, but to anticipate them. The *Palais Royal*, the usual place of meeting of the agitators and news-hunters, was crowded with people who came to learn, and to descant on the deliberations of the assembly, to excite each other to resistance to the legal authorities, and to win over by violent harangues those who were not already willing to go to any length to break all existing laws, in order to have the pleasure of making new ones. On the 30th June an event took place, which must have been to the court one of the most portentous signs of the times, as it proved that even the army was not to be depended upon. Attempts had repeatedly been made to corrupt the troops stationed in Paris, and particularly the French guards, who had their permanent quarters there. These attempts had not been unsuccessful. The soldiers had several times taken part in the revolutionary demonstrations of the populace, and had declared that they would never draw a trigger against their fellow-citizens. On the 30th, several soldiers who had been imprisoned for similar conduct were violently released by the Parisian mob, who then addressed a petition in their favor to the National Assembly, which, in its turn, recommended them to the clemency of the king. The guards were imprisoned again to save appearances, but liberated the

next day. The National Assembly participated in the terrors of the capital, and, trembling for its own safety, in seeing the road between Paris and Versailles blocked up by troops, kept up a regular correspondence with the plotters in the former city, with the mob of the Palais Royal, and with the electors, who had declared on the 12th May that they would remain together to support the deliberations of the States-General. At last, anxious to ascertain its real position, it openly denounced the government to the nation, and, in an address to the king, demanded the removal of the troops, which impeded the freedom of their deliberations. The king replied to this address that he had called the regiments together to prevent any disturbances, and if the States-General felt themselves constrained in their deliberations, they were at liberty to retire to Soissons or Noyon, a permission which was translated into a desire to place them between two camps, and was consequently not acted upon. The court, which had long been divided between conflicting opinions,—some being for the most extreme measures of coercion, others, among whom was Necker, for concessions,—now grown bolder, determined to strike a decisive blow, and Necker, who had hitherto been implored to retain his office, in order that his popularity might in some measure shield the court against the public animosity, was now dismissed, together with the other liberal members of the ministry, and they were replaced by ultra-aristocrats. Necker's dismissal, which even bore the semblance of banishment, as he left France the very same day, was known in Paris the next day (12th July, 1789) and caused the greatest uneasiness. Notwithstanding the number of troops dispersed about the town, and in the neighborhood, great crowds collected together, particularly in the gardens of the Palais Royal,

where a young man, Camille Desmoulins, mounted upon a chair, pistol in hand, and harangued the bystanders: "Citizens," said he, "there is not a moment to lose. The dismissal of Necker is the signal for a St. Bartholomew of patriots. This very evening the foreign battalions will leave their camp in the Champ de Mars, to come and murder us. We have but one resource left, and that is to fly to arms." "To arms!" reiterated his inflammable auditors; and, following the example of their leader, each man plucked a leaf from the trees of the garden, and stuck it in his hat as a cockade. They next proceeded to the shop of a wax-worker, seized upon the busts of Necker and the Duke of Orleans, (whose gold, it is said, had not a little part in the enthusiastic exhibitions which so frequently took place,) and paraded them through the street. Camille Desmoulins' predictions of the movements of the troops then, of course, proved true; but the havoc committed by the regiment of cavalry, headed by the Prince de Lambesc, which charged the mob assembled in the Tuileries Gardens, was not great. However, the accounts of all these encounters between the royalists and the people, are so differently given by the different parties, each charging the other with the greatest excesses, that it is difficult to discern the truth. It may with probability be inferred that both parties have been greatly in fault, for civil war is a fearful instigator of evil passions. The fury of the people became more and more uncontrollable; the alarm-bell sounded, the barriers were burnt, the shops of the armorers pillaged, and troops of brigands, mingling with the people, augmented the terror and the devastation, by burning and pillaging wherever they went. The French guards, fully imbued with all the revolutionary notions, left their barracks, where the authorities had command-

ed them to be held under restraint, and, bayonet in hand, charged the regiments that remained faithful, and drove them from their posts.

During this time the electors had assembled at the Hôtel de Ville, whence they directed the riots, and taking upon themselves the authority of the municipality, they delivered the arms of the Hôtel de Ville into the hands of the multitude, and ordered the convocation of the *assemblées primaires* of the districts, and finally decreed the formation of a civic guard of forty thousand men, bearing a blue and red cockade, the colors of Paris. This city was left in the hands of the mob during the night, and the next morning things bore a still more tumultuous aspect. The militia was formed, and joined by the soldiers of the French guard, and of the police force, (*guet.*)

Camille Desmoulins, who in his restless ardor was everywhere, had arranged a separate militia of the students of the university and of the school of medicine; and the lawyers' clerks had formed themselves into a volunteer corps. Wherever arms were to be had, they were seized upon by the mob, who also, for want of more regular weapons, laid hold of any thing that came within their grasp. The pavement of the streets was torn up to form barricades, and large stones were carried into the houses to be used as missiles against the troops, who played but a sorry part in all this turmoil, for want of energy and judgment in their commanders. The Baron de Besenval, the commandant, complains of having been left without orders from Versailles, while he, in his turn, is accused of having spared the mob, in the hopes that they would spare the splendid mansion which he had lately fitted up for himself in the most magnificent style; but whatever the cause, the result

was, that nothing was done to stop the lawless proceedings of the capital. The third day (July 14th, 1789) the mob attacked the Hôtel des Invalides, where they gained possession of twenty-eight thousand muskets and twenty pieces of field artillery, and thence proceeded to the Bastille, which had for centuries been the stronghold of despotism and the dungeon of its victims, there to wreak their vengeance upon the innocent governor and the garrison, consisting of one hundred and fourteen Swiss and invalids, and there to surpass, by their atrocities, all the horrors that the grim old walls had ever yet witnessed.*

The governor, De Launay, it is said, had received orders from Besenval to hold out until the evening; at all events, the commander of a royal fortress surely could not be expected to surrender because he was called upon to do so by a rebellious mob; but the time had already come when it was considered high treason against the nation not to submit to and take a part in any of its crimes; and when, after a protracted resistance, and having in vain tried to blow up the fort, the gallant governor was forced to surrender, the fury of the mob was at its height. The garrison, though it had laid down its arms, was with difficulty saved from extermination. A young and beautiful girl, supposed to be the daughter of De Launay, was seized, and upon the point of being burnt alive, when she was saved by the heroism of a young soldier. Every thing that was valuable within the fortress was destroyed; and in their

* It is melancholy, that when we have to record the destruction of a heartless despotism which for centuries had weighed upon a suffering people, that the acts of that people should be such that the sympathizing heart sickens, and almost steels itself against the woes of those who show themselves so little deserving of liberty. But so it is—the morals of a people and its governors depend mutually upon each other, and go on acting and reacting in one unbroken chain of cause and effect.

blind fury the mob continued to fire their muskets when there were no more enemies to attack, and thus destroyed the lives of many of their comrades. When the work of destruction was terminated, they rushed, shouting and yelling, towards the Hôtel de Ville, carrying one of the French guards, crowned with laurel, in triumph on their shoulders, while the keys and the rules of the Bastille were borne before him stuck upon a pole. At the moment that they penetrated into the town-hall, a blood-stained hand raised above the multitude presented the buckle of a shirt-collar, belonging to the governor De Launay, who had just been decapitated.*

It is said in honor of the French guards, who had joined the people, and who were present at these butcheries, that they did their utmost to save the unhappy victims. But the fury of the mob could not be checked, and their thirst for blood was not yet satisfied. Their next victim was Flesselles, the provost of the merchants, whom they accused of treason. He was seized in the midst of the frightened electors assembled at the Hôtel de Ville, and dragged away to the Palais Royal, there to be judged; but the impatience of the miscreants would not wait for this mockery, and he was struck down by a shot from a pistol on one of the quays.

While these scenes of riot and bloodshed were going on at Paris, the greatest terror and anxiety prevailed at Versailles, both at court and in the assembly. The former, in hourly fear of seeing the Paris mob moving towards Versailles, lined the road between the two towns with troops, and did every thing to raise the courage and ensure the fidelity of the men, without, however, taking any decisive step, though it is asserted by

* It is said that his head was cut off by a cook who was present with his kitchen-knife.

several historians, that a plan was concerted for putting down the Revolution by force of arms, for dissolving the National Assembly, after having forced it to subscribe to the king's declaration of the 23d of June, and for assisting the empty treasury by issuing a hundred millions of government notes.

The assembly had been anxiously watching for accounts from the capital; it is said by the partisans of the Revolution, who maintain that the assembly had been fully aware of the projects of the court, that it saw new danger to itself in these measures, but nevertheless continued its sittings. As soon as it had received intelligence of the events of the 12th, a deputation was sent to the king to demand the removal of the troops, whose presence they maintained was the cause of all the turmoil, and begging him, in their stead, to form a burgess guard. The king replied, that he could not accede to their demands, because Paris was not able to defend itself. Upon receiving this answer, the assembly passed resolutions insisting upon the removal of the troops, and on the establishment of a burgess guard, declaring the ministers and all the agents of the government responsible, casting upon the actual counsellors of the king, *however elevated their rank*, the whole responsibility of the misfortunes which were preparing. It consolidated the national debt, and persisted in all its former decrees, and then, after having expressed its disapprobation of the removal of M. Necker and his colleagues, declared itself permanent, and elected the Marquis de Lafayette* as vice-president.

* This young nobleman owed his popularity to the part he had taken in the American war, where he had gained the friendship of Washington and the respect of his countrymen, and whence he returned with ideas of liberty which were quite in consonance with the popular wishes of France at the time.

Upon receiving further accounts of the scenes going on at Paris, new deputations were sent to the king, which equally failed in eliciting any satisfactory reply. The king was, however, now seriously alarmed, though the court affected to laugh at the pretensions of the mob to reduce the Bastille,—a fortress which had stood the siege of the great Condé ; and when at last the Duke de Liancourt, one of the deputies, a personal friend of the king's, and who held a situation in his household, which gave him access to his person at all times, broke into the king's bed-chamber in the night to announce the fall of the Bastille, a general consternation prevailed. "What, a revolt!" exclaimed his majesty. "Not a revolt, sire," replied the duke, "a revolution." He prevailed upon the king to repair to the assembly the next morning to give it a proof of his confidence. But in the interval the assembly, which had also been greatly moved at the accounts from the capital, had resumed its sitting, and, ignorant of the change which had taken place in the king's disposition, a new deputation was determined on, and was on the point of departing when it was detained by Mirabeau. "Tell the king," cried he, "tell him boldly, that the hordes of foreigners by which we are surrounded were visited yesterday by the princes, the princesses, and their favorites, and have received their presents, their caresses, and their exhortations. Tell him, that during the whole night these foreign satellites, gorged with wine and money, have predicted in their in-pious songs the subjugation of France, and that their brutal prayers invoked the destruction of the National Assembly. Tell him, that even in his own palace, his courtiers have danced to the sound of this barbarous music, and that such were the scenes which ushered in the St. Bartholomew. Tell him, that Henry IV., whose

name is blessed throughout the universe, that one among his forefathers who ought to be his model, introduced provisions into rebellious Paris, besieged by himself, and that his ferocious counsellors will not allow that corn which commerce brings, to enter into Paris when faithful and famishing."

But scarcely was this speech pronounced, and the applause of the assembly silenced by Mirabeau himself, when the king entered, accompanied by his two brothers only, and in a simple and touching speech reassured the assembly, and told them that he had ordered the withdrawal of the troops. "You have doubted me," he said in conclusion; "well, then, I will confide myself to you." The sullen silence with which he had been received was now interrupted by lively exclamations of joy, and the king was escorted home by the whole assembly, accompanied by the shouts of the multitude. A deputation of one hundred members then repaired to Paris, which was preparing to withstand a siege, to announce the reconciliation of the king with the representatives of the people, and was received with the greatest enthusiasm. Bailly and Lafayette were among the delegates, and the former was offered the mayoralty of the city, the latter the command of the burgess guard. Both accepted, and advised the king to follow them to Paris, to put the seal to his reconciliation with his people.

The king consented, and fixed the 17th July for his visit. The state of Paris became every day more alarming. The barriers were closed, the regular authorities suspended, the streets lined with patrols and cannon, while hordes of murderers carried dismay and consternation everywhere; but, notwithstanding all these fearful manifestations, the king remained faithful to his word. So sure was he, however, of not returning unscathed from

the dangers that beset his path, that he spent great part of the night previous to his departure for Paris in regulating the regency, and early in the morning, after attending religious exercises, took an affecting leave of his disconsolate family, who had tried in vain to conquer his resolution.

He set off, accompanied by a deputation from the assembly, and arrived at the Hôtel de Ville, surrounded by a dark and threatening multitude, who had not one cheer for the monarch, whose chief fault was that weakness which rendered him incapable of inflicting pain upon others, though for their benefit, but who dared to encounter every danger which threatened his own person alone. It was only at the moment when the king appeared at the window of the Hôtel de Ville, with the national cockade in his hat, that the slightest cheer was heard from the mob. After having confirmed the formation of the national guard, and of the provincial and municipal government, in a word, after having assented to the revolution effected by physical force, he returned to Versailles, where his safe arrival produced the greatest joy.

But though Louis was safe, royalty was degraded, and France was thenceforward, for years, to know no other rulers than an infuriated multitude. Those that had conjured up the storm, thinking that they should ride as masters upon it, and lay it when it suited their purpose, now perceived that the fundamental laws of a state cannot be touched with impunity, and when once the veil is torn from the sanctuary of the temple, all reverence ceases; that the law of the land cannot be violated, and still continue to be effective.

One anecdote, the truth of which has never been contested, will suffice to show what was the state of Paris after the king had left. Among the ministers who re-

placed Necker and his colleagues was a M. de Foulon, who is described as being hated by the people for the heartless levity with which he had spoken of their sufferings, at a time in which they were complaining that they had no bread. "Let the canaille eat grass and thistles; it is good enough for them," M. de Foulon is reported to have said, and the people, eager to grasp at any, however absurd, accusation against the classes that they had been taught to hate, marked out M. de Foulon as the object of universal execration. Foulon being fully aware of the hatred which he had excited, and being old and weak, fled from Versailles on the 15th July, took refuge in one of his own country-houses, and gave out that he had died of an apoplectic fit. The death and funeral of one of his servants happened very opportunely to give a semblance of truth to this fiction, but soon after the ingenious secret was betrayed, and the old man was dragged from his house by the exasperated villagers, who, binding his hands, and placing a garland of nettles round his neck, and a bouquet of thistles in his breast, drove him before them to Paris, kicking and cursing him all the way. Arrived at Paris, he was brought before the mayor and the committee of electors, sitting at the Hôtel de Ville, who tried in vain to rescue him from the mob, by persuading the people that the more guilty he was, the more necessary it was that he should be tried by the laws.

Law was a powerless word in the mouth of those who had themselves signed the death-warrant of the laws of the realm, and the impatient mob insisted upon carrying Foulon to the Place de Grève, there to execute justice upon him at their favorite lamp-post. Resistance was vain, every man in that fierce multitude was gasping for blood, and the report that Necker was returning

to Versailles, and had recommended a general amnesty, made them more fearful of seeing their hopes of vengeance frustrated. And to the Place de Grève they dragged the white-headed old man, tied a rope round his neck, and hauled him over the *lanterne*. Three times the rope broke—three times the miserable sufferer was precipitated to the ground, crying for mercy, and receiving kicks and insults in reply. When at last life had departed, the head was cut off and stuck upon a pike, and while some paraded this through the streets, others dragged the headless trunk after them. On their way they met a mounted escort, and a crowd of people on foot, conducting Foulon's son-in-law, Berthier, who had been taken prisoner at Compiègne, to the Hôtel de Ville, there to submit to a kind of legal interrogatory, which was, however, again interrupted by the cries of the multitude: "Finish with him, the Faubourg St. Antoine* is coming! The Palais Royal is coming! They will have his head!" and the next minute the guard which Lafayette had placed at the door was swept away, and the hall was inundated by the people, who were again victorious, in spite of the resistance of the authorities, and of the brave struggles of Berthier himself. Attempts were made to hang him on the same lamp-post which had just witnessed the death of his father-in-law, but he struggled so fiercely that he was pierced by several bayonets before the mob could accomplish their project. It is said that even before life was extinct, one of these vile wretches tore the heart from his panting bosom, and the mob, then rushing back to the Hôtel de Ville, presented it to Bailly and Lafayette. May we not suppose that at this, and other similar

* The Faubourg St. Antoine is inhabited by the worst rabble of Paris.

fearful sights, which now daily met their eyes, the conscience of these men must have smote them, and that they must have asked themselves, who it was that had let loose these bloodhounds, who it was that had converted the brilliant capital of a civilized country into a den of murderers and robbers? The adherents of the ancient state of things, who, on their side, had, by obstinate and interested resistance to wholesome and timely reform, contributed so greatly to bring about the misfortunes under which they were now suffering, began to fly from the dangers which they did not know how to meet, and the king and queen, nobly sacrificing their own happiness for the welfare of those they loved, persuaded many of their most faithful servants to leave France. Several princes of the blood, among whom the king's unpopular brother, the Comte d'Artois, also left the country, and from that period the tide of emigration may be considered as fairly set in, and every day saw the peaceful, the lovers of order, abandoning their country and their king to the lawless hordes who were now predominant, and seeking in foreign lands those comforts which they could not enjoy at home.

CHAPTER IX.

Recall of Necker—Inability of the Assembly to govern—Disturbances throughout France—Frightful Atrocities committed by the Peasantry—Proceedings of the National Assembly—Despoiling of the Privileged Classes—Desecration of the Churches—Dissent of the King useless—Declaration of Rights—The Assembly intimidated by the Mob—State of Paris—Dismal Prospects for France—Military Banquet—Dreadful Tumult—The Mob proceeds to Versailles—Deputation to the King—The Palace forced by the Mob—Danger of the Queen—The Royal Family taken to Paris.

ON the 28th of July, Necker, who had been recalled in accordance with the desire of the assembly and of the people, arrived at Versailles, after having traversed France accompanied by a shouting multitude, who hailed him as the guardian angel of the country, and to whom he recommended peace and order. He was received by the king with embarrassment, but by the National Assembly, who considered his recall as their triumph, he was greeted enthusiastically.

At Paris, where he may be said to have enjoyed a regular ovation, he demanded from the electors and the representatives a general amnesty;* which was immediately granted. But a few days afterwards the amnesty was revoked, on the plea of its being illegal for an administrative body to condemn or to pardon; for, when it served their purposes, these men could even renounce the power of the moment.

Besides recalling Necker, the king had chosen his own counsellors from among the majority of the assembly, and seemed sincerely inclined to follow in the revolutionary movement. But calm and prosperity did not

* It is not one of the least strange anomalies of the times, to see the minister of the king of France appealing to a revolutionary body for a measure which, even in its revolutionary capacity, it was incompetent to grant.

therefore return to the land. Obedience and subordination had become obsolete terms among the French, and the people, having once seized the sceptre of power, were determined not to let it again be wrested from them.

Paris remained in a state of the utmost agitation. The electors had transmitted their functions to a committee of one hundred and twenty administrators elected by the several districts. But this new municipal government, having no laws by which to be guided, being surrounded by obstacles of every kind, and having to attend to every thing: to the administration of justice, (as far as that was allowed them by their masters, the mob,) to the provisioning of the town, to police regulations, and army discipline, succumbed under the immensity of the burden; while the national guard, commanded by Lafayette, was equally insufficient to maintain order. The provinces had followed the example of Paris, and several towns had demolished the fortresses that commanded them, as Paris had demolished the Bastille. Suddenly the report was spread that bands of brigands were traversing the country, cutting down the harvests, and destroying the granaries. The whole population flew to arms, and these arms, once in their hands, were immediately turned against their fellow-citizens.

The peasantry commenced a new *Jacquerie* against their landlords; they laid waste their property, and burnt down their houses, taking good care that the archives, containing title-deeds, &c., should not escape the flames, which circumstance seems to prove that the peasantry had among them advisers better versed in the knowledge of law than they themselves. They refused to pay their taxes, and in many cases committed the most outrageous cruelties against their masters—cruelties which we would willingly pass over in silence, were it

not necessary to show what are the acts of a people who have set law at defiance, and what is the retribution that a false system brings upon itself.

One gentleman, the owner of a château, was suspended in a well for an hour and a half, while his persecutors were deliberating upon what should be his mode of death. Another, the Chevalier d'Ambli, was dragged naked through the village, and buried in a dung-heap, after his eyebrows and hair had been plucked out by the roots, the mob dancing round him all the while. In Normandy, a gentleman afflicted with the palsy was thrown into the fire, and only escaped with the loss of his hands. A gentleman's steward was tortured and burnt until his feet were consumed, to make him give up his master's title-deeds. But it was not men alone on whom these savages exercised their fury. In Franche-Compté, Madame de Batilly was almost torn to pieces, and was forced to resign all claims to her property, while an axe was held suspended over her head. The Countess of Montessu was dragged with her husband from their carriage into the middle of the road, a pistol was held at her breast for three hours, and she was finally thrown into a pond.

Matrons with their daughters were seen flying from their burning houses in the middle of the night, with nothing but their night-clothes on, too happy if the loss of their property was the only thing they had to bewail.

Churches, churchmen, and church property were as little spared as nobles and their châteaux, and the people, not content with hating the clergy, openly proclaimed their hatred of religion, not alone in their deeds, but in words.

While the people were thus practically showing the sense in which they understood liberty and the rights of

men, the members of the National Assembly, not re-awakened from their delusive dreams by even these fearful realities, were busied in drawing up a written declaration of the rights of man, which was to serve as the basis of the much-talked-of constitution. Sometimes, indeed, the voice of reason was raised to suggest that, under existing circumstances, every thing that could add new fuel to the fire that was raging without, ought to be avoided; but this voice was soon put down by the clamors from the galleries, where the executive of France, the rabble,* sat in lordly power, controlling the acts of its servants. There is in the spectacle of the assembly at this time, something that most forcibly recalls the old German legends, in which we see conjurers ruled and tyrannized over by the evil spirits they have themselves invoked.

On the 4th August, 1789, a vote was carried that there should be a declaration of the rights of man, but on that same day arrived such overwhelming tidings of the murders and ravages of all kinds which were being perpetrated throughout the country, that, seized with a sudden panic, the members of the privileged classes, who had hitherto sought to maintain their rights, now vied with each other in sacrificing them on the altar of their country, as it was termed. The Viscomte de Noailles gave the signal, by proposing the redemption of feudal rights, and the suppression of personal servitude. The Duke du Chatelet proposed redeeming all the tithes by changing them into a pecuniary tax. The

* Though I use the word rabble, it is not to be supposed that these assemblages of men consisted merely of those we are wont to denominate by that name in England. But I use this word because, whatever was their position in society, the deeds of those men were such as to leave no other designation for them. One cannot apply the name of people or nation to an assembly of madmen and murderers, be their numbers ever so great.

Bishop of Chartres proposed the suppression of the exclusive right of the chase, the Count of Virien, that of pigeon-house and dove-cotes; others the abolition of seignorial jurisdictions, the venality of the offices of magistrates, pecuniary immunities, and inequality of imposts; also the abolition of the perquisites of the curés; of the *annats* of the court of Rome, of the plurality of benefices; of pensions obtained without titles, &c. The deputies of the *pays des états*, seized next by this phrensy for self-sacrifice, then stood up to renounce the privileges of their provinces, and were followed by the towns and corporate bodies, all offering up their privileges. At last, the assembly, in a transport of enthusiasm, proclaimed Louis XVI. the *restorer of French liberty*, and a medal was struck in commemoration of this day, which a witty royalist has denominated the St. Bartholomew of property; and there were not a few, who, participating in this opinion, on the 5th of August, regretted the enthusiasm of the 4th, and remonstrated as to the propriety of the resolutions passed on that day. The Abbé Sièyes himself, who, as vicar-general of the bishopric of Chartres, and canon and chancellor of the cathedral of Chartres, had to bear a great many of the sacrifices which the clergy had made, was, by this home-thrust to his pocket, at once brought back to common sense, and he declared that the proposition to abolish tithes altogether, by which the declaration that the tithes should be redeemable was followed up on the morrow, was an attempt at wholesale robbery. It was on this occasion that he pronounced the words which have been chosen as a motto to this work. He was answered by Mirabeau in these words: "My dear Abbé, you have let loose the bull, and now you are complaining of his giving you a touch of his horns;" and so indeed it was; the clergy

and the nobles, those who had acted from the enthusiasm of the moment, as well as those who had given way to a power they had not strength to resist, now felt the dire consequences of having joined a chamber composed of twice their numbers, and mostly consisting of men who had neither interests nor property at stake. All equilibrium in the state was gone, and the vessel was fast foundering. But that there was still dignity of sentiment left in the conquered minority, we may see from the words with which the Archbishop of Paris, seeing that resistance was useless, surrendered on the 6th of August, in the name of the whole clergy, all the tithes into the hands of the nation. "Let the Gospel," said he, "be preached; let divine service be performed with decency and dignity; let the church be provided with virtuous and zealous pastors; let the poor be succored. This is the true destination of our riches; these are the objects of our ministry and of our wishes; for ourselves personally we rely, without bargain and without reserve, on a just and generous nation." But, alas! the nation to which these words were addressed, was as anxious to cast off its allegiance to its God, as to its authorities, (indeed how could it be otherwise, for whosoever fears the Lord fears the law;) and the churches so nobly resigned to its care, were, in a few short months, shut up, or converted into barracks, storehouses, or club-rooms, and the most conscientious of the clergy persecuted unto death, or wandering as exiles in foreign lands.

When Louis XVI. heard of the proceedings of the 4th August, he said that force alone should make him sanction the destitution of his nobility and of his clergy; "For when I cede," added he, "there will be in France neither monarch nor monarchy." These words were

too true, and, when the king repulsed the decrees presented for his sanction, the assembly nevertheless adopted them as constitutive, and declared the royal sanction needless. Nothing was left to the king but to promulgate them.

The assembly was now clearly divided into three parties, which were generally designated by the place they occupied in the chamber. The right was the party of the court, the nobles, and the clergy, and their orators were Cazalis, a young captain of dragoons, and the Abbé Maury. The left was the popular party, whose most prominent members, besides Mirabeau and the Abbé Sièyes, were Barnave, Lameth, and Duport, a young counsellor who had distinguished himself in the parliament. The centre was occupied by a small number of the popular party, who, having gone as far as they thought right, were now anxious to stop, and whose opinions, in accordance with Necker's, called for the English constitution. The most remarkable men among these were Lally Tollendal, Mounier, and Mallouet.

After having struck down with one blow the long-standing feudal structure, the representatives of the people went on, seriously occupying themselves with the projected declaration of the rights of man, which did not fail, in the progress of discussion, to present itself to many of the members of the assembly in all its absurdity.*

* "I remember that long discussion which lasted for weeks," says an eyewitness, "as a season of mortal *ennui*: there were empty disputations about terms,—there was an accumulation of metaphysical rubbish, and an overpowering loquacity,—the assembly seemed converted into a disputatious school of Sorbonne, and all the apprentices in legislation made their essays in these puerilities. After many models had been rejected, a committee of five was appointed to draw up a new one. Mirabeau, one of the five, had the generosity which was ordinary to him to take the whole task upon himself, and then give it to his private friends to perform it for him. There then we were—Duroverai, Clavière, Mirabeau, and myself—composing, dis-

But the word had been pronounced, and the rabble in the gallery did not mean to give up the hopes which the words, "All men are born free and equal," with which this declaration was to be headed, held out to them; and after having confused, and bewildered, and tired each other for many consecutive days with vague theories and disputations, a declaration, replete with contradictions and inconsequences, was at last published, and proclaimed in the first days of September, and the assembly then proceeded to debate on the form to be given to the future constitution. According to the instructions from the constituents to their representatives, which were all unanimous in demanding a representative monarchy, it would have been supposed that the constitution of England would have presented itself to all minds; but since then things had taken a different turn, and in deeds, if not in words, the nation had already passed from absolute monarchy to a democratic republic. How was it to be supposed that a house of lords could be established, after the furious scenes we have seen enacted against the nobility, and after the nobility had itself renounced all its rights; and how is it to be supposed that

putting, writing a word and scratching out four words, exhausting ourselves over this ridiculous task, and producing at last a piece of patchwork, a miserable mosaic of the pretended natural rights of men, which had never existed. During the course of this *triste* compilation, I made reflections which I had never made until then. I felt the falseness and the absurdity of the work, which was nothing but a puerile fiction. The declaration of rights, said I, may be made after the constitution, but not before it; for rights exist by laws, and cannot precede them. Such maxims, besides, are dangerous. We ought not to bind legislators by general propositions, which we may afterwards be obliged to modify and limit. Above all things, we ought not to bind them by false maxims. It is not true that "*All men are born free and equal.*" They are not born free. On the contrary, they are born in a state of helplessness and necessary dependence. And where are they born equal? Where can they be so born? Do we mean equality of fortune, of talent, of virtue, of industry, of condition? The falsehood is manifest. Volumes would be required to give an appearance of sense to this equality which you proclaim without any exception."—DUMONT.

an insane people, rioting in the unlimited possession of power, would deliver up again willingly to the monarch, who had become a mere puppet in their hands, the sceptre which they had snatched from him? No; anarchy was let loose, and was not to be bound again, before the sins of those who had invoked it had brought their retribution of sufferings upon their heads, and therefore were the principles that were laid as the foundation of the new constitution those of the Abbé Sièyes: "The people commands, the king executes." So fully were these principles adopted, that it was even matter of long discussion whether the king should have an absolute or only a suspensive *veto*; during which discussion the people in the gallery, though perfectly ignorant of the meaning of the word, continually cried out *à bas le veto*, merely because it was something that was to be granted to the king. During all this time, however, the assembly went on professing its respect and affection for his Majesty, and its attachment to a constitutional monarchy, and it would be unjust to think that none of these men were sincere; but in state affairs ignorance is crime, and, therefore, whatever may have been their intentions, in point of fact, every one of them was guilty of the downfall of the French monarchy. It was at length determined that the legislative power should be vested in a single assembly, that this assembly should be permanent, and that it should alone possess the power of proposing laws. The absolute veto was still warmly maintained, but the people, exasperated at the thought that their representatives should deliberate upon a measure which they in their ignorance had put down as connected with every kind of despotism under which they had as yet suffered, began to make most violent demonstrations. At the Palais Royal motions were made against the as-

sembly ; the deputies, who still adhered to the king, were threatened with being recalled, with being put upon their trial, with having " their châteaux lighted up." A general convocation of the districts was called for, and it was proposed, and even attempted, to march against Versailles. Lafayette tried in vain to arrest the multitude, bloody frays took place between the mob and the national guards, and murmurs were raised against the despotism of the bourgeois. The assembly gave way before these demonstrations, and a majority of six hundred and seventy-three voices, against three hundred and fifteen, voted for the king having the power to pronounce a suspending veto only, during two sessions of the legislature, (21st September, 1789.) But this vote did not restore order and tranquillity to the capital, where the scarcity of provisions was daily more and more poignantly felt, and where every vestige of authority or subordination was destroyed.

The municipality had to send to distant parts of the country for corn, which was sold at great loss, and which was obliged to be brought into town under military escort, to escape the pillage of the famished country people ; and while the people were in this state of suffering, every day brought new mortal inquietudes to those who still bore the name of authorities. Mayor Bailly was sinking under his cares, and Lafayette was in daily expectation of riots, which he should not be able to put down ; and to crown the whole, the sixty districts into which the capital was divided took the character of sixty independent republics, each giving orders in opposition to those of the community, had its own police, its own armed force, which entered into open struggles with those of the community, and much was not wanting to make them break out into open warfare.

Dull and dreary were, indeed, the prospects of France—anarchy and distrust reigned through the land. The aristocracy was suspected of entertaining projects of vengeance; the princes who had left the country were supposed to be seeking the succors of foreigners; the king, who had merely adopted certain articles of the declaration of rights, saying, that he could not sanction the others until the constitution was ready, was also looked upon with distrust. Reports of a new conspiracy of the court against the people were generally credited among the latter, and it was said that the king was going to fly to Metz, and to march an army against Paris, and that the queen was in correspondence with the Comte d'Artois, and with her brother the emperor of Germany. A new regiment added to the garrison of Versailles, and two thousand body-guards quartered in the palace, occasioned the greatest alarm, and the Palais Royal decreed that the king ought to be separated from those who surrounded him, and ought to be brought to Paris, where his presence would ensure a sufficient supply of provisions, and would accelerate the completion of the constitution.

A banquet given on the 3d of October by the *gardes du corps* (body-guards) to the officers of the garrison of Versailles, gave the signal for scenes more atrocious than any of those which had as yet taken place. It was said that the king and queen had appeared at the banquet amid the enthusiastic cheers of the officers and guards, and that, towards the end of the repast, the guests, excited by the wine which had circulated freely, had trampled the national cockade under their feet, insulted the National Assembly, and threatened an assault upon Paris. The suspicions against the court were confirmed by these reports, and it was said that a plan was laid for reducing Paris by famine.

The people assembled in great masses on all sides, and on the morning of the 5th of October, a woman, who had taken possession of a drum, traversed the streets, crying out: "Bread! bread!" gathering around her thousands of her own sex, (among whom, however, it is supposed there were many men in women's clothes,) with whom she proceeded to the Hôtel de Ville, where they made a desperate attack; the national guards posted at the entrance giving way before them, they rushed into the interior of the building, followed by men armed with pickaxes, who pillaged the armory. When this was done, Maillard, one of the heroes of the attack upon the Bastille, cried out, "Let us on to Versailles!" and "To Versailles! to Versailles!" was echoed on all sides; and the hideous assembly set itself in motion, carrying with it wagons, arms, and cannons, and recruiting their numbers with all the women they met on their way.

In the mean time the representatives of the commune had arrived, and the tocsin had called together the national guards, but the love of anarchy had taken such strong possession of all minds that there was no peaceable set of citizens to appeal to. When, therefore, Lafayette exhorted the people to order, a grenadier of the national guards stepping forward, replied, in the name of his comrades: "The people are unhappy—the source of their misfortunes is at Versailles—the king must be brought to Paris—and those who have outraged the national cockade must be exterminated." In vain did their commander represent to them the sufferings that such conduct would occasion; new shouts of "To Versailles!" was all the reply he obtained, and the mob moved on. Troops of savage men from the faubourgs had already joined the female furies, and accompanied

them on their way, uttering the most fearful imprecations and threats against the court and the king, but more especially against the queen, whose unpopularity had gone on increasing ever since the commencement of the disorders. After eight hours' useless resistance, Lafayette at last prevailed upon the municipality to order him to Versailles with his guards, and he set out accompanied by two of its members.

The greatest consternation prevailed at court at the news of the extraordinary army which was approaching, and which was descried through a thick fog in the Paris avenue between five and six in the afternoon.

The drums immediately beat the *générale*, the iron gates of the palace yard were locked, and the body guard ordered out to defend them. In the morning the assembly had sent a deputation to the palace, to demand the "pure and simple" acceptance of the declaration of rights, which being refused, had given rise to loud murmurs of discontent, which ended in a general denunciation of the court, and particularly of the banquet given by the guards. In the midst of this tumult news was brought to the assembly of the approach of the mob, and towards four o'clock, when they were in the act of breaking up, hordes of women rushed into the room with loud cries. Maillard, who was at their head, harangued the assembly, exposed the misery of the people, and vaguely accused persons of high standing of having brought about the scarcity by foul means. After having in vain attempted to appease this vociferous multitude, the assembly (hoping to force the king at this critical juncture to subscribe to their wishes) at last determined to depute the president Mounier to the king to submit to him the declaration of rights, but they were obliged to allow twelve women chosen by the mob to

accompany him. The king received them with his usual kindness, gave orders that provisions (the want of which was the excuse for every riot) should be taken to Paris, and promised to accept unconditionally the declaration of rights. But during this time the mob without, growing impatient, attacked the body-guards, who, however, persevered in strictly maintaining the defensive, until, upon the king's order, they withdrew to their quarters, pursued and shot at by the Versailles militia, though they did not return a single shot. The court was in the greatest agitation, and a council was held to decide whether the king should fly or remain. The carriages were even ordered to the door, but the traces having been cut by the national guards of Versailles, the king, who was very unwilling to take any extreme measures, signed his acceptance of the declaration of rights, and decided upon remaining, in order not to give way, it is said, before the Duke of Orleans, who was strongly suspected of being at the bottom of all the riots and disorders. But the fact of the assembly's having chosen the moment of confusion for pressing upon the king the declaration of rights, certainly leaves very great room for suspicions as to the part it may have had in this tumultuous rising.

After the king had refused to leave Versailles, it was proposed that the queen at least should remove with her children to Rambouillet, a palace eight miles from thence ; but she steadily refused to leave the king while he was in danger, and said, that if the mob wished for her death, she knew how to confront it.

In the mean time night had broken in, and the clamors of the savage multitude against the queen and the aristocrats spread terror and dismay through the court. At midnight the arrival of Lafayette and the Parisian army

was announced. The commander immediately presented himself before the king, together with the two deputies from the municipality, to assure his majesty of the fidelity of the national guards at Paris, and to express to him the wishes of the inhabitants of that town, which were to the effect, that he should allow himself to be guarded by the militia alone,—that he should find means of assuring the subsistence of the people,—that he should remove to the capital, and hasten the conclusion of the constitution. The king answered evasively to the last-mentioned proposals, but acceded to Lafayette's entreaties to be allowed to replace the troops of the line, who defended the palace, by his guards, part of which was composed of the former French guards. About two o'clock every thing seemed comparatively quiet, when Lafayette persuaded the royal family, as well as the members of the assembly, to take a little rest; but the sounds which reached them from the public houses, in which the mob had sought shelter from the pelting rain, or from the fires round which bivouacked those who could find no other refuge, gave them sufficiently to understand that this quiet could not be of long duration.

At five o'clock Lafayette threw himself on his bed to seek rest, and at six o'clock a violent attack was made upon the body-guards. Many of them were killed; those who endeavored to escape were pursued like wild beasts, and fifteen having been seized were taken before the palace and there murdered. The main body of the rioters then rushed upon the palace, and penetrated into the interior, shouting and indulging in the grossest invectives against the king and the queen, who, warned only just in time by one of the faithful guards, who lost his life in the prosecution of his duty, had just escaped from her bed-chamber, when a party of the assassins

rushing in, advanced towards the bed with uplifted spike ready to strike the fatal blow.

In the mean time the body-guards having rallied after the first surprise, and being assisted by the paid companies of the national guard, succeeded in repelling the assailants from the palace; and upon Lafayette's arrival some kind of order was restored.

But the crowd before the palace continued to vociferate, "The king must go to Paris," and Lafayette having depicted in the most frightful colors the dangers of a refusal, Louis XVI. again putting on the so-called national cockade, the badge of rioters and murderers, presented himself at the balcony once more to degrade himself before the mob, and to declare himself their humble slave. He was received with shouts of "*Vive le roi*," but the queen's name was again mentioned, accompanied by threats and invectives. According to the accounts of the royalists, this princess (who from the commencement showed a courage and a greatness of soul of which we cannot but regret the want in her husband) appeared upon the balcony holding the dauphin by the one hand and the princess royal by the other. But voices crying out "No children!" the prince and princess were sent in, and the queen stood in all the majesty of her beauty, calmly casting her eyes upon the assembled multitude, which, struck with admiration, burst into exclamations of applause.

According to other accounts, the queen appeared on the balcony accompanied by Lafayette, who, being unable to make himself heard, respectfully kissed her majesty's hand, to make known the reconciliation which had taken place.

The storm now gradually subsided. Early in the morning the king had proposed to the assembly to trans-

fer its sittings to the palace, in order to ensure, by its presence, the safety of the royal family. But this proposition had been rejected, and a deputation only of thirty-six members sent to the palace. When, however, the king had determined to go to Paris, in accordance with the wishes of the people, the National Assembly decreed that the person of the king was inseparable from the representatives of the people, and that a deputation of one hundred members should accompany him.

The first bands of the mob had already moved towards Paris to announce their victory, carrying with them the heads of two body-guards who had shown the greatest valor in defending their royal master. They arrived at twelve o'clock, but were dispersed by a detachment of guards sent after them by Lafayette. Two hours later arrived the commencement of a *cortège*, the end of which only entered Paris at ten o'clock at night, and which for strangeness and wildness has probably never been equalled. First came the regiment of Flanders, the Swiss, and the artillery. Then wagons loaded with ragged women and drunken men, streaming with tri-colored ribands, and singing obscene songs. These were followed by sixty wagon-loads of corn, after which came the national guard, interspersed with women armed in the most grotesque way with the weapons and helmets of the murdered guards, men of a wild and savage appearance, and disarmed body-guards. After them came the National Assembly on horseback or in carriages, then the carriages of the royal family, to whom this journey had been one continued scene of insult and of horror, surrounded by detachments of the depraved hordes that had visited Versailles. The whole was closed by wagons containing flour and luggage.

To all that was hideous to the eye and lacerating to

the heart in this scene, was added all that is offensive to the ear. Among obscene songs, frightful threats, and still more frightful exclamations of joy, were heard shouts of, "We shall no longer starve, we are bringing the baker, the baker's wife, and the baker's boy."



CHAPTER X.

Emigration of many of the Deputies—The National Assembly holds its Sitings at the Tuileries—Martial Law Proclaimed—Formation of the New Constitution—Financial Embarrassments—Extraordinary Proposition of Necker—Supported by Mirabeau—Appropriation of the Property of the Church—*Assignats*—State of Parties—The Clubs.

AFTER the king had taken up his abode at the Tuileries some kind of outward tranquillity was for a time re-established, for even the furious mob could not refrain from acknowledging his sincere desire to do all the good he could ; but the immense number of emigrations* which

* No less than three hundred deputies demanded foreign passports after the scene of the 5th and 6th October, and among them were two of the most moderate and most sincere members of the assembly, Mounier and Lally Tollendal, the latter of whom has left upon record, in the subjoined letter, the feelings of horror with which he viewed the ruthless deeds of those who dared to deck themselves with the name of patriots, and at the same time it gives a vivid description of the scenes we have just sketched.

... "But let us speak of the resolution which I have taken ; I can perfectly justify it to my conscience. Neither that guilty city, nor that still more guilty assembly, deserve that I should justify myself to them : but I am desirous that you and those who think like you, should not condemn me. I swear to you that the state of my health rendered it impossible for me to attend to my business, but even without considering my functions, it was beyond my power any longer to support the horror which I felt at the sight of that blood—those heads—that queen almost murdered—that king carried along like a slave, surrounded by assassins, and preceded by the heads of his unfortunate guards. Those perfidious janizaries—those assassins—those cannibal women—that cry of *All the bishops to the lamp-post*, at the very moment when the king was entering Paris, with the bishops belonging to his council in his carriage—a musket which I saw discharged at the queen's carriage ; M. Bailly calling that a *happy day*. The assembly having declared in the morning that it was below its dignity to go in a body

took place at this period, shows that minds were nowise at rest, and that greater disorders were expected to follow. And indeed how could it be otherwise, while the assembly continued its work of destruction, while the chief of the state was but a prisoner and a puppet in the hands of his subjects, and while there was not in the state one power to resist the brute force which the mob had learned so well how to use, and which was ever at the command of such men as Camille Desmoulins, Marat, and others, who knew the secret of exciting ignoble passions, and were not ashamed of availing themselves of it.

Thirteen days after the king's arrival in Paris, he was followed by the whole of the National Assembly, which installed itself first in the Archbishop's palace, and afterwards in the *Salle de Manège*, in the Tuileries, and

to remain with the king, M. Mirabeau saying, with impunity, in the assembly, that the vessel of state, far from being retarded in its course, would proceed more rapidly than ever towards its regeneration. M. Barnave laughing with him, while floods of blood flowed around us. The virtuous Mounier, escaping by a miracle from twenty assassins who wished to add his head to their other trophies. These are the things that made me swear never again to put my foot into that den of *cannibals*, (the National Assembly,) where I had no more strength to raise my voice, and where for six weeks I had raised it in vain. The only thing which was left for Mounier, myself, and other honest men to do, was to leave it. No feeling of fear has actuated me. I would blush to deny it if it were so. I have even received, on my route, applause and acclamations from that people which is even less guilty than those who have roused its evil passions: but that applause, those acclamations, which might have flattered others, made me shudder. It is before my indignation, before the horror, before the physical convulsions which the sight alone of all that blood caused me, that I have given way. One may brave death once, one may even brave it many times, if it is needed, but no power under the heavens, no opinion, either public or private, has the right to condemn me to suffer uselessly a thousand deaths in every minute—to condemn me to die of despair and rage in the midst of the triumphs, of the crimes, which I have been unable to prevent. They will banish me, they will confiscate my property. I will dig the earth for my bread, may I only not see them again. This is my justification; you may read it, show it, copy it: so much the worse for those who cannot understand it; but I shall not be wrong for having given it to them.”—Extract of a Letter from M. Lally Tollendal, to a friend.

commenced a kind of inquiry into the proceedings of the people, which, however, resulted in nothing more than the temporary banishment of the Duke of Orleans, whom, though nothing was proved against him, and though a prince of very little talent or capacity of any kind, it has served the purpose of different parties to designate as the instigator of all the atrocious acts which blot the annals of those times. The assembly then resumed its constitution-making, but was soon interrupted again by new riots, occasioned by the renewed scarcity of provisions; and being now in the midst of the danger, and having learned that its members were nowise considered sacred by the people, it was deemed necessary to take strong measures of defence, and martial law was proclaimed in Paris. By this law the municipalities were made responsible for the public tranquillity; in case of riots they were empowered to call in the aid of the troops or of the militia; and after three warnings, were ordered to employ force against seditious assemblies. This law was not passed without opposition, particularly from Robespierre, deputy of Arras, who having also become ambitious of power, courted the suffrages of the mob, which it required no great genius to see was at that moment its sole dispenser. Still this time order was triumphant in the assembly, the members of which in truth began to feel rather uneasy at the chaos around them out of which they had to create a new world.

One cannot but think that at this juncture, even among these men, most of whom affected to be free-thinkers, there must have been a vague feeling that such power belongs to the Almighty alone, and that man, if he wants to build, must have something to build upon, were that something even but a mud bank, or a fetid swamp; and that he who destroys the foundation, and attempts to

build upon the vacuum it leaves, is but a madman or a knave. But should even this gleam of truth have forced itself upon them, they had no longer the power of retracing their footsteps; the impulse was given, faith was destroyed, and human arrogance had taken its place.

Thus though recourse was had to some of the ancient institutions of the country, such as the court of the Châtelet, to inquire into and put a stop to the disorders that were daily taking place, the assembly at the same time went on with its work of destruction. It had abolished the feudal system, but there was another body in the state, with ancient rights and ancient authority, which had as yet not been wholly divested of these. "The clergy possessed property. They had received it from princes under the name of feudal gratifications, and from the faithful under the title of legacies. If the property of individuals, the fruit and reward of labor, ought to be respected, that which had been bestowed on a body of men on conditions altogether different, ought to yield to the empire of the law. It was for the service of religion they had been given, or at least under this pretext, but religion being a public service, the law might provide means of accomplishing this object in any way deemed most advantageous to the public interest."* The Abbé Maury on this occasion, as Abbé Sièyes on a previous one, stood up in defence of the clergy, and pointed out the peril to all property, if such a measure were carried. But Mirabeau, who had replied to Abbé Sièyes by a *bon mot*, now decided the hesitating assembly by a play

* THIERS. M. Thiers follows up this passage by saying that the assembly, by taking possession of the property of the clergy, secured to itself those immense financial resources which so long supported the *Revolution*. These were then "the services of religion which the law" thought proper to substitute for those to which it was applied by the clergy. What law is this? What religion? What do these men understand by law and religion?

upon words. He suggested that instead of saying that the property of the clergy *belonged* to the state, they should say that it was *at the disposal* of the state, and the discussion was immediately terminated by a great majority in favor of the measure. In the mean time the constitution began by degrees to rise on the foundation which had been laid on the 4th of August, and the resolutions passed on that memorable night, became the starting-point of a political organization, in which particular existences, either of individuals or of institutions, were to disappear in the national unity. "It was necessary first to produce this unity in the land, by doing away with those provinces which still seemed to be but so many different nations which the dynasty of the Capets had gathered together, without confounding them in the monarchical unity. A decree abolished the division of the kingdom into provinces, and divided France into eighty-three departments, almost equal in population and extent, and which were subdivided into districts, cantons, and *communes*. This division took into account neither local customs, local traditions, nor local existences; the surface of the land was taken as its only basis; the provinces were deprived of their privileges, their parliaments, and their separate administrations; even their historical names, which recalled to the mind thoughts of independence, were blotted out, and new names, derived from the physical construction of the soil, announced that there were no more dutchies, no *pays d'états*, no Bretons, no Provençaux; there were only France, and Frenchmen. This was the chief work of the assembly; it completed the destruction of the feudal system, broke forever the chain of olden times, commenced the era of new social systems, and united all the strength of the state in one powerful centralization; in a word, it was

the constitutive act of the national unity, which had been prosecuted with so much perseverance, since the time of Hugh Capet, and thus attained after eight centuries of struggles.”*

The whole political system was harmonized with the departmental division, and for this end the administration of the departments was confided to a council of thirty-six members, and to an executive directory of five members; the districts had similar authorities subordinate to those of the department, and the commune was directed by a council and a municipality, which was again subordinate to the authorities of the district. This was the material basis of the new system; the moral basis was the election of all these authorities by the people. The *acting* citizens, that is, all those who paid a contribution of the value of three days' work, (one mark of silver,) chose from among the citizens who paid a contribution of one hundred and fifty, or two hundred days' work, electors, who in their turn nominated the deputies for the National Assembly, the administrators of the department, of the district, and of the commune, and the judges, the bishops, and the curates. The parliaments were abolished, and in their stead three new orders of tribunals erected, whose members were elected, and only temporary: there was a criminal tribunal for every department, a civil tribunal for every district, and a justice-of-peace for every canton. Besides these, a supreme court was established, charged with the functions of watching over and preserving the judicial forms. Trial by jury was admitted in criminal cases only.

* Lavallée. I give this description in the words of a French writer, because though he is by no means one of the most immoderate of the partisans of the Revolution, they convey the spirit in which these changes were undertaken, and the way in which Frenchmen of our day account for the labors of the National Assembly.

In order to give a clearer conception of the new constitution which the assembly prepared for France, I have somewhat anticipated the date ; for all these regulations were not at once established, and by degrees, as they were decreed, they awoke new resistances, and brought out more decidedly the different parties in the state, so that between the contests of the supporters of the old order of things, and the enactors of the new, general confusion prevailed, and even those earnestly inclined to submit to whatever were the rules of the kingdom, were embarrassed what part to take.

The passing of the decree (2d December, 1789) which put the assembly in possession of the property of the clergy, was perhaps greatly accelerated by the extraordinary financial embarrassments which impeded the march of the revolution. The assembly had from time to time suspended its legislative discussions, to satisfy the most urgent wants of the treasury, and had adopted, almost without discussion, the provisional means proposed by Necker. But a loan of thirty millions, decreed on the 9th of August, had not succeeded, and a subsequent one of eighty millions, decreed on the 27th of the same month, had been insufficient, as all the ordinary sources of revenue were stopped by the abolition and reduction of many taxes, and by the difficulty of collecting those that remained. It was then that Necker proposed an extraordinary contribution of a fourth of the national income, payable in advance, and that Mirabeau supported him by that burst of eloquence which carried the measure. "In relation," said he, "to a ridiculous motion which never had any importance, except in weak imaginations, or in the perfidious designs of dishonest men, you have lately heard these furious words : '*Catiline is at the gates of Rome, and we deliberate!*' and

there was around us neither Catiline, nor factions, nor perils, nor Rome ; but to-day the bankruptcy, the hideous bankruptcy is here ; it threatens to swallow up yourselves, your property, your honor, and you deliberate !”

The measure thus carried, had also produced only a momentary relief, and therefore recourse was had to the decree which had declared the property of the church national property. The difficulties were not, however, got rid of, even by these extraordinary means. When a decree ordered the sale of church domains to the amount of four hundred millions, it was found that purchasers did not present themselves, for the rapidity with which the innovations followed upon each other, and the general confusion they produced, impressed even the most superficial minds with an idea of the precipitancy and instability of the new regulations, and men were unwilling to part with their cash for property, the legality of the possession of which might soon be disputed. The “commune” of Paris helped the assembly out of this dilemma. It proposed, and the assembly resolved, that the municipalities should be authorized to purchase these domains from the state, and to sell them again to private individuals, when they should present themselves ; but as the municipalities had not ready money to pay down at once, it was decided that they should pay in bills, with which bills the treasury would, in its turn, pay its creditors. Afterwards it was found better, instead of these municipal bills, or *assignats*, as they were denominated, to create exchequer bills, to which they gave a forced circulation, and which became, in reality, a paper money, as a decree limited the quantity of *assignats* to the value of the ecclesiastical property which was put up for sale, and ordered the immediate destruction of all redeemed *assignats*. But the power of infringing, as

well as the power of decreeing, was in the hands of the assembly, and at a later period, *assignats* were circulated to an amount immensely surpassing that of the value of the lands—a measure, say the partisans of the Revolution, and of the doctrines of expediency, “which was not very perfect in a financial point of view, but which was most excellent in a political point of view, as it was the saving of the Revolution.” Thus a revolution which commenced in the name of a suffering people, supported itself by still further impoverishing that people.

During the debates which were going on in the assembly, the parties became daily more decidedly marked, and each had again, without the assembly, its supporters and instigators, particularly among the clubs, which grew in importance as the revolutionary movement extended, and in some of which were already germinating the still more democratical movement which was to succeed to the existing one. The most prominent among them, was that of the “Friends of the Constitution,” first formed at Versailles by Lafayette and other of the Breton deputies, but which was now transferred to Paris, and established in the ancient convent of the Jacobins in the Rue St. Honoré, from which it took its name of the Jacobin Club, a name which has become but too fatally notorious in the history of these times. From this period dates the admission into its body of persons quite unconnected with the assembly, and a change in the spirit of its members, who soon separated. One party, at the head of which were Danton and Camille Desmoulins, for whose hot patriotism even the revolutionary eloquence of the Jacobins was too lukewarm, established themselves in the convent of the Cordeliers, the name of which they took; another party, whose

moderate principles repugned the violent proceedings of the Jacobins, and which was particularly influenced by Lafayette, and afterwards joined by all the moderate men of the times, took the name of the "Club of 1789 ; Friends of the Monarchial Constitution," afterwards converted into that of the "Feuillans," after their place of meeting, the convent of the Feuillans. It is said that the Jacobin Club counted no less than three hundred similar establishments in France, which were in direct correspondence, and forty-four thousand in indirect correspondence with it. What was its influence and power, may be judged from this immense extension, and what was the character of its influence cannot be better described than by quoting the words of a writer of the present day, who says, when speaking of the eloquence of its members, it was "impassioned, dull, droning, patriotic eloquence : implacable, unfertile save for destruction, which was indeed its work : most wearisome, though most deadly."*

The activity of these clubs was powerfully aided by the innumerable newspapers that were in circulation, and by the oratory of the hundreds of mob patriots, who, following the example of their betters, harangued the passers-by from the top of the corner-stones, or from a tub, a barrel, or an old chair, and passed their opinions upon state affairs, and national regeneration.

* Carlyle.

CHAPTER XI.

Reports of Counter-Revolutions—Disaffection of the common soldiers—The King appears at the Assembly—His speech received with universal applause—Distrust again exhibited—Execution of Favras—Counter-revolutionary projects—Debates in the Assembly—Civil Constitution of the Clergy—Fête in the Champ de Mars—Revolt in the Army—Clergy required to swear to maintain the *civil constitution* just decreed—The King compelled at length to sanction this decree—Opposition of the Clergy—Mortification of the King.

AT the commencement of the year 1790, the comparative calm which had succeeded the king's removal to Paris, began again to give way before a general agitation and uneasiness, particularly caused by the number of reports that were in circulation as to the counter-revolutionary intentions of the court, which was supposed sometimes to base its hopes upon succors from without through the instrumentality of the emigrants, particularly of the Comte d'Artois, who had sought refuge at Turin, and sometimes on the army under Marshal Bouillé,* and even on the assistance of certain parties in the assembly.†

* Bouillé, stationed at Metz, commanded a large division of the army, and a vast extent of frontier, and possessing all the feelings of the aristocracy, though not in their excess, he did every thing in his power to preserve his troops from rising. He was a man of great courage, much talent, and great integrity, and could not therefore fail to be disgusted with the weakness of the court and the base and clandestine measures of its agents.

† From the period of the court's removal to Paris, Lafayette's conduct becomes more clear, and thenceforward he cannot but be regarded as a sincere adherent of the Constitutional Monarchy; as one of those who, disgusted with the outrages committed by that revolution which they began in hope and sincerity, earnestly endeavored to put down anarchy, and to bring about a reconciliation between all parties which should ensure the happiness of the country. He therefore approached the court, and was received by it with more cordial feelings than before. It is said, however, that the queen, who was in fact the directing spirit of the court, hoped more from Mirabeau, whom she had succeeded in winning, and who, in point of genius, was vastly superior to Lafayette. Of all the men of the Revolution, none have been so differently judged as Mirabeau. After a youth spent in vice and wild adventures, he presented himself to the nobles

Violent affrays often took place between the army and the populace, and frequently the common soldiers, who were devoted to the new order of things, while the officers adhered to the old, delivered up the latter to the vengeance of the people. The clergy, particularly in Brittany, where they had most influence, protested against the alienation of their property, and excited their flocks to support their interests; the parliaments also made a last struggle for their ancient rights and privileges, and all these movements were in the minds of the people and the assembly connected with the plans of the court. At this time a Marquis de Favras, an adventurer who had sought his fortune in different parts of Europe, was brought before the court of the Châtelet accused of being at the head of a conspiracy to promote the flight of the king, to assassinate Bailly and Lafay-

of Provence as a candidate for their suffrages for the States-General, but being indignantly rejected by his peers, he turned to the *Tiers Etat*, offering himself as advocate of interests the very reverse of those of the nobility. What mattered it to him? he had no convictions to follow up, he merely sought a stage on which he could act before the world. When there, though his voice was the one which was most frequently raised to threaten and coerce royalty and its instruments, it was his voice also that was raised to prevent despotism from being merely transferred from the crown to the representatives of the people, and to maintain for the crown the prerogatives without which the monarch would be a mere puppet. But it was his voice also which determined the fall of those ancient institutions whose birth was cotemporary with that of the monarchy, which was left a foundering wreck when they fell. Like all the men of his day, Mirabeau had no clear and defined object for which he was laboring, and though the superiority of his genius often afforded him glimpses of the truth, when others were in utter darkness, he had not in his heart that love of truth which would have led him to toil unceasingly for its attainment when he had once discerned it. True genius will always discern truth, but it is the moral character of the man, that will decide whether this discernment will lead to great results or not. There never was a truly great man (even in the general acceptation of the term, which does not of necessity comprise moral greatness) without faith, and it is this absence of faith that is the cause of our not seeing one great man during the French Revolution. The infamous celebrities of the reign of terror, were but mediocrities led by circumstances, not commanding them.

ette, whose National Guards still guarded the palace, and to march an army of Swiss and Piedmontese against Paris. The alarm was general, and it was whispered that Monsieur, the king's eldest brother, who had once had some connection with Favras, was not a stranger to this plot. The prince presented himself at the Hôtel de Ville, and protested against the insinuations directed against him; and the king, alarmed at the agitation created by this new suspicion, was advised to take steps to conciliate public opinion. On the 4th of February he in consequence repaired to the assembly, where his presence was quite unexpected, and where he was received with great applause. After the assembly was again seated, the king, standing, addressed to them a speech, in which he expatiated on the troubles to which France was a prey, the efforts which had been made to calm them, and to provide for the subsistence of the people; he recapitulated the proceedings of the assembly, glancing at the efforts he had himself made to attain the same objects in the provincial assemblies, and finally showed that he had throughout manifested a desire for reforms. He added that he thought it particularly incumbent upon him to ally himself more closely to the representatives of the nation, at the moment when they had submitted to him decrees, destined to give a new organization to the kingdom. He would endeavor to promote this new system, he said, with all his power, and would consider every attempt to resist it as highly criminal, and punish it with all the severity of the laws. These last words were enthusiastically applauded, and the king proceeded to notice the sacrifices which he had himself made, and called upon all those who were similarly situated, to imitate his resignation, and to let the advantages of their country console them for the sacri-

fices of their private interests. After having promised to defend the constitution, he added : " I will do more ; in concert with the queen, who partakes of all my sentiments, I will prepare betimes the mind and heart of my son,* for this new order of things which circumstances have brought about ; I will accustom him from his earliest days to be happy in seeing the French people happy, and to acknowledge forever, in spite of the language of flatterers, that a wise constitution will preserve him from the dangers of inexperience, and that a lawful liberty will add a new value to the sentiments of love and fidelity, of which the nation has for so many ages given such touching proofs to its kings." At this part of the speech the transports were universal, and for a moment it might have been supposed that the sentiments of which the king had spoken, were still glowing in all hearts. The king continued—expressing his anxiety about the respect due to the ministers of religion, and to the rights of property, and timidly recommending the assembly not to undertake too many things at once, and representing how necessary it was to establish the authority of the executive power, without which there could be no lasting power within the kingdom, no respect abroad, no effective government. He ended by professing his attachment to the new constitution, his ardent desire for the peace, happiness, and prosperity of France, and exhorting his subjects to follow his example.

Unmixed applause from the assembly, from the gal-

* What had been the impression this unhappy child had received of the Revolution may be judged by the touching anecdote told by Mde. Campan. Walking on the day after their arrival at Paris, in the garden of the Tuileries, with the queen, the dauphin, on seeing some scuffle take place in the street, rushed into his mother's arms, asking in an agony of terror : " Mamma, mamma, is to-day going to be yesterday again ?"

leries, and from the people without, applause in which even the queen had a share, proved the complete success of the step the king had taken. No sooner had he departed than the assembly voted an address of thanks to him and the queen, and then following the royal example, each of its members took oath "to be true to the nation, the law, and the king, and to maintain with all his power the constitution decreed by the National Assembly and accepted by the king."

This as every other feeling at that time communicating itself like an electric shock from one to another, the whole nation was soon repeating the oath; but even before the enthusiasm at this reconciliation between the people and the king could reach the more distant parts of the kingdom, distrust had already sprung up anew among the parties. Favras had been condemned to death by the Châtelet, though protesting that he was innocent, and was hanged on the Place de Grève, to the great satisfaction of the populace, who had long been impatient to enjoy the example of equality represented by the spectacle of a marquis dangling from a common gibbet, which it surrounded with a kind of savage delight, indulging in atrocious jests, and parodying in different manners the death-struggle of the unfortunate sufferer.*

In the south a regular connection was maintained with the Comte d'Artois and the emigrants at Turin, and different counter-revolutionary projects were entertained. The "*haute noblesse*" refusing, it is said, to let any other class have a part in re-establishing the ancient state of things, for fear of having to share the advantages with it, was determined to re-establish the throne by the succors of foreign courts alone, while the "*petite*

* Thiers.

noblesse," rejecting with indignation such a plan as little better than treason, proposed to reawaken the ancient spirit of fanaticism of these provinces, and to make the religious ardor of the people and their attachment to their priests serve the purposes of the crown.*

The ancient hatred of the Catholics for the Protestants was fomented, and it broke out in open violence, when the assembly refused, on the 13th July, 1790, to recognise the Catholic faith as the religion of the state. The discussion of this question occasioned the most violent scenes in the assembly, and is said to have been brought about by the court, which seems at that period to have been most active in secret machinations against the Revolution, in order to bring the assembly into disrepute with those among the French who still clung to their ancient faith. A few days afterwards another question was mooted, which is also attributed to the court. The new organization was completed, and as the people were to be convoked to elect their magistrates, it was proposed that they should, at the same time, elect new deputies to replace those who actually formed the National Assembly, and whose power, it was maintained by those who framed the proposition, was limited to one year, which was now very near its expiration. This proposition was, indeed, pregnant with so much confusion and disorder, that no one can help suspecting its origin, whether we incline to the side of those who pretend that it was a project of the court, which, thinking that the aristocracy and the clergy would be able to exercise a pre-eminent influence over a new election, deemed it a means of regaining power; or whether we look upon it as an attempt of the republican party, whose

* M. Froment, *Recueil de divers Ecrits relatifs à la Revolution*. M. Froment was one of the chief actors in the plans carried on between the provinces of the south and Turin.

centre was the Jacobin club, at once to obtain that power, which they but too soon gained. However this might be, the proposition was vehemently rejected, and the assembly decreed that new elections should not be proceeded to, until it should be deemed proper by its own body. These debates were soon followed by others no less violent, on the following momentous questions—whether the right of declaring war and peace should appertain to the crown or to the assembly, and on the *civil constitution of the clergy*. The first question was left entirely to Mirabeau and Barnave, the former supporting the right of the crown, the latter advancing the claims of the assembly, and looked upon as the champion of the rights of the people, though he, in fact, only clothed the same proposition in different words. Mirabeau, on this occasion, excited such hostility among the populace, that the report of his having sold his services to the court, which had long circulated in whispers, was now loudly proclaimed, and a pamphlet was hawked about the streets, having for title, “*High Treason of the Comte de Mirabeau.*” But these attacks only lent new vigor to Mirabeau’s eloquence, which gained the first decisive victory for the crown which it had won since the commencement of the Revolution. It was decreed that the king should notify to the assembly the commencement of hostilities, and propose the decree of war or of peace, on which the assembly was to deliberate, and present the result of its deliberations for the sanction of the king.

By the *civil constitution of the clergy* was understood the placing of the whole ecclesiastical establishment of the state on the same footing as the judiciary. Every department was to have its bishop as it had its superior tribunal and administration, and bishops and curates

were to be elected as were the administrators and judges. This arrangement, which completely destroyed the constitution of the church, dissevered the bonds which bound it to Rome, and made it entirely dependent upon the people, of course met with the most violent resistance from the clergy, who appealed to the pope against these decisions.

But discord was now again to be suspended for a moment to give place to one of those wonderful scenes of almost idyllic love and harmony to which this strange people seemed to abandon itself with as much delight as it did to the diabolical scenes of carnage and suffering in which it had already taken part, and which were to be far surpassed in the future.

The strange love of excitement, whatever its nature, as evinced at this time, furnishes one of the strongest proofs that the Revolution, though originally caused by a false and wicked system, was carried on by a kind of national intoxication without an aim or an object.

The troubles in the south had given rise to confederations between those who were devoted to the Revolution, which were entered into with a kind of solemnity, the confederates swearing in public to the accompaniment of drums and fifes, and with flying banners, and other festive demonstrations, that they would stand by each other in all trials. And as this passion for swearing seemed to have taken possession of the whole people, these confederations, promoted by the Jacobin club, and not discouraged by the National Assembly, soon spread over the whole kingdom,* and were to be crowned by the gen-

* It is strange that all French historians persist in seeing in those demonstrations evidence of the faith of the people in the Revolution, whereas, in truth, they prove that the nation felt (though without accounting to itself for the feeling) that it was in a state of dissolution.

eral confederation of the whole of France, which, according to the proposition of the municipality of Paris, was to be celebrated in the capital by deputations from all the national guards, and from all the regiments of the army, on the 14th of July, the anniversary of the taking of the Bastille.* The description of this fête, certainly one of the most extraordinary the world has ever witnessed, is given in the following words by a contemporary, M. de Ferrières :

“The confederates arrived from all parts of the empire ; they were lodged in private houses, whose possessors were anxious to furnish beds, sheets, wood, and all that might contribute to render their stay in the capital agreeable and comfortable. The municipality took measures to prevent this great confluence of strangers from troubling the public tranquillity. Twelve thousand laborers worked without ceasing at the preparations in the Champ de Mars. Notwithstanding the activity with which this work was carried on, it advanced but slowly. It was feared that it could not be finished for the 14th July, the day which was irrevocably fixed for the ceremony, being the famous epoch of the insurrection of Paris and the taking of the Bastille. In this difficulty the districts invited, in the name of the nation, the good citizens to join the workmen. This civic invitation electrified every one ; the women partook of the enthusiasm, and propagated it ; seminarists, novices, sisters

* As a prelude to this feast of harmony and brotherly love, the assembly decreed that the feeling which the populace had given utterance to under the gibbet of the Marquis de Favras should be still further indulged, and that nobility and titles, and all their distinguishing marks, such as armorial bearings, liveries, &c., &c., should be abolished, and thenceforward men were to be distinguished by their merits alone. Mirabeau, notwithstanding his affected disdain for the class to which he belonged by birth, is said not to have been quite indifferent to the sacrifice of giving up his title, and to have exclaimed (31st August, 1790) upon the occasion, “With your Riquetti, (his family name,) you have confused all Europe for three days.”

of religious orders, and monks grown old in solitude, left their monasteries, and repaired to the Champ de Mars with spades on their shoulders, and carrying banners ornamented with patriotic emblems. The scene which this plain presented was as singular as it was interesting. The most dissimilar characters were associated together with the most perfect equality ; a dishevelled courtesan and a virtuous matron might be seen working together as fellow-laborers, a capuchin and a chevalier of St. Louis drawing the same dray a porter and a *petit-maitre* digging at the same piece of ground, a robust fish-woman and an elegant lady of rank filling the same barrow. The rich, the poor, the well-dressed and the ragged, old men, children, comedians, soldiers, clerks—some at work, some at rest, actors and spectators, afforded together a spectacle full of life and motion. Moveable taverns and portable shops ; songs and exclamations of joy, the sounds of drums and military music, the clatter of spades, the roll of barrows, and the voice of laborers encouraging each other, completed the charm and gayety of this enchanting scene.

“The 14th of July, the day of the confederation, arrived. If this grand ceremony had not the serious and august character of a fête, at the same time religious and national, a character which is nearly irreconcilable with the temper of the French people, it presented a delightful and animated picture of joy and enthusiasm a thousand times more touching. The confederates, ranged by departments under eighty-three banners, set out from the Place de la Bastille ; the troops of the line, bands of sailors, the Parisian national guard, drums, bands of music, and flags, opened and closed the march.

“The confederates traversed the streets of St. Martin, St. Denis, and St. Honoré, and proceeded to a bridge

of boats built on the river. They were received in their progress by the acclamations of an immense populace, who thronged the windows, the streets, and the quays. Wine, hams, and fruit, were let down to them from the windows, and the people hailed them with benedictions. The National Assembly joined the procession at the Place Louis XV., and marched between a battalion of veterans and of scholars of the military school ; a station expressively emblematic, which seemed to intimate that in them the interests of all ages were united.

“ Meanwhile more than three hundred thousand persons had been assembling from Paris and the environs, at the Champ de Mars, since six o'clock in the morning. They were seated on the grass bank which formed a circus round the plain, dripping with rain, and splashed with mud, and holding up umbrellas to keep off the torrents which poured upon them, and on the slightest symptom of returning sunshine, wiping their faces, adjusting their dresses, and awaiting with smiles the arrival of the National Assembly. As soon as the first confederates arrived, they struck up a dance. Those who followed imitated their example. This spectacle of so great an assemblage of men come from all parts of France, banishing all memory of the past, all thought of the present, and all apprehension of the future, and giving unrestrained vent to the gayety of the moment ; and of three hundred thousand spectators of every age, and both sexes, following their movements with their eyes, beating time with their feet, and forgetting the rain, hunger, and the wearisomeness of waiting so many hours, was worthy the contemplation of a philosopher. At last the whole procession entered the Champ de Mars ; the dancing ceased, and the Bishop of Autun*

* The celebrated Talleyrand.

proceeded to solemnize the mass. Lafayette, at the head of the Parisian militia, and of the naval and military deputies, then approached the altar, and swore, in the name of the troops and confederates, to be faithful to the nation, the law, and the king. The discharge of four pieces of artillery announced to France this solemn adjuration. The president of the National Assembly repeated the same oath. The people took it up, and the words *I swear it*, rent the air. The king rose up and proclaimed with a loud voice, *I, King of France, swear to employ the power with which a constitutional act of the state has invested me, to maintain the constitution decreed by the National Assembly, and accepted by me.* The queen, at the same time taking the dauphin in her arms, and holding him up to the people, exclaimed: *Behold my son; he joins me in these sentiments.* This unexpected exclamation called forth a thousand shouts of *Vive le Roi! Vive la Reine! Vive le Dauphin!* Bands of military music, the roar of artillery, and the acclamations of the people, then closed the ceremony with stunning and triumphant harmony."

With the festive decorations disappeared the seeming concord, and France was again the theatre of fierce struggles. All Bouillé's endeavors had been in vain; the army, inspired by the pervading spirit, had revolted, first at Metz, then at Nancy, at which last place an engagement (31st August, 1790) ensued between the troops who had remained faithful, and the rebels, in which the latter were conquered, and for a time order was re-established.

Necker, whose influence and popularity had long been on the wane, made a last ineffectual protest against the issuing of eight hundred millions' worth of *assignats*, decreed by the assembly, and then tendered his resigna-

tion, and his example was soon followed by his colleagues in the ministry, who were indeed but mere nullities, and who had been made to understand that such was the desire of the assembly.

The king, whose position became more and more painful, began at this period to entertain thoughts of flying from the capital, thoughts which he had a long time rejected, because he judged that his flight would be the signal for civil war; but things now began to wear such an aspect, that this evil seemed at all events to be inevitable.

The popular party, exasperated by the continued efforts of the clergy in the western and southern provinces, to get up counter-revolutionary movements, decreed, as a means of crushing their resistance, that the ecclesiastics, as well as all other functionaries, should take the civil oath before their "communes" and in their churches, and in addition to this, that they should swear to maintain the *civil constitution of the clergy*. Those that refused were to be considered as having forfeited their situation, and it was ordered that lists should be made out with the names of those who took, and those who did not take, the oaths. These decrees were presented to the king for his sanction. He secretly referred them to the pope, who refused his concurrence; but riots having again taken place, the king gave his sanction, and thereby greatly exasperated the clergy, who persisted in their resistance to a measure which they considered illegal in the extreme. With the exception of sixty-four curates, all the ecclesiastics members of the assembly refused to take the oaths, (27th November, 1790,) and their example was followed by five-sixths of the clergy of the realm. They were, in consequence, dismissed from their functions, and their

places filled with more tractable occupants. But the dismissed ecclesiastics protested against these proceedings, declared their successors to be illegal intruders, and excommunicated all those who should receive the sacrament from their hands.

To all the other anomalies in the state, was thus added the deplorable spectacle of two distinct clergies, the one in open opposition to the new laws of the state, the other heretical according to the ancient laws of the church. The revolutionary party lost the support of men whose moral character ensured respect, while the adherents of the *ancien regime* regained, by their means, a part of the people, who in some of the provinces of France were devotedly attached to their priests, who had always been to them true friends and protectors. The refractory clergy thus became the most formidable opponents of the revolution, while the constitutional clergy (as they were called) brought it into the greatest disrepute by the looseness of their morals and the impiety of their doctrines. To the doubts and anxieties to which the king, in consequence of his weak but conscientious character, had long been a prey, were now added the reproaches of his conscience for not having had the strength to protest against the violation of the ecclesiastical constitution, and the humiliation, felt even by him who had submitted to so much, at having even his ministers forced upon him by the popular will.

CHAPTER XII.

The King secretly solicits the aid of Foreign Powers—Project of Mirabeau—His Death—The King not allowed to go to St. Cloud—His Remonstrance—Secret Convention with Foreign Powers—Flight of the King and Queen—Discovered and Arrested—The Royal Family brought back to Paris—Decree of the Assembly—Answer of the King to the Commissioners deputed by the Assembly—Republican Agitation—Decree preserving just the Shadow of Monarchy—Riots at the Champ de Mars—National Guards fire upon the People—Former Idols now execrated—Treaty of Pilnitz—Preparations for War—The Constitution completed—The King accepts it—Dissolution of the Assembly.

THE king, though now apparently determined upon taking some step to emancipate himself from the thralldom in which he was kept, still wavered between the different means held out to him. On one side he negotiated with the sovereigns of Europe, to whom he sent the Baron de Bretueuil to solicit their aid in re-establishing his authority, and wrote, on the 30th December, 1790, to the king of Prussia, "I claim with confidence your support at a moment when, notwithstanding my acceptance of the new constitution, the factions openly show their intention to destroy what remains of the monarchy. I have addressed myself to the emperor, to the empress of Russia, to the kings of Spain and Sweden, and have presented to them the idea of a congress of the principal powers of Europe, supported by a strong army, as the best means of arresting the factions here, and of re-establishing a more durable state of affairs; and of preventing the evil under which we are suffering from spreading to the other states of Europe. I hope that your majesty will approve of my ideas, and will keep my secret inviolably."* On the other side, the

* *Histoire Parlementaire de la Révolution*, vol. x. Though the misfortunes of Louis XVI. give him the greatest claims to our compassion and our forbearance, one cannot help feeling indignant at seeing a king who had

connection with Mirabeau, whose confidence in his own power inspired others with an equal idea of his importance, was more sedulously cultivated, and regular plans for the counter-revolutionary movement were concerted with him.

In the mean time emigration had increased to such a degree, that it was considered necessary to put a stop to it; but when the measure was proposed in the National Assembly, Mirabeau declared against it, and carried the victory by his usual audacity, though he could not prevent a decree from being passed relative to the residence of functionaries, in which it was declared, that if the king left the kingdom he should be considered as having abdicated.

But neither this, nor his being denounced in the Jacobin Club as a traitor, prevented Mirabeau from prosecuting his plan of persuading the king to fly to Lyons, to take up his stand there as a mediator between the emigration and the assembly, by giving a new constitution to the realm, which should consecrate all the great principles of the Revolution. He encouraged the king by assurances of having gained a party in the assembly, among the orators of the now all-powerful clubs, and among the administrators of thirty-six departments. The king at last acquiesced; Bouillé was made acquainted with the royal intentions, and the means of execution were being discussed, when death put an end to Mirabeau's career, on the 2d April, 1791. His death was considered a public calamity, and his body was deposited in the church of St. Geneviève, converted into a pantheon destined to receive the great men of revolutionized France.

not ventured one courageous step to maintain his own dignity thus appealing to foreign aid.

The death of Mirabeau did not alter the determination of the court to leave Paris, but it made its movements less decided, and gave a new character to the flight, which, undertaken under Mirabeau's auspices, would never have been considered as a complete breach with the assembly and the people, but which, concerted with Bouillé and the emigrants alone, was, when it took place, regarded as nothing less than high treason to the state ; for though the men of those days held very light the ancient laws of the monarchy, they required from the monarch very strict adherence to those they had imposed upon him.

On the 18th April the king proposed going to St. Cloud, (a summer palace in the environs of Paris,) to spend the Easter-week there, but the people, suspecting that this was but a pretext, assembled in great numbers round the carriage, and cut the traces. Lafayette was unable to disperse them, as his guards refused to obey his orders, and the king was obliged to return to the Tuileries, whence he repaired to the assembly, by which he was received with every mark of deference, to complain of the violence used against him. The partisans of the Revolution assert that the king sought every opportunity to make it appear he was under restraint ; but though we may disapprove of the double-dealing to which Louis in his weakness too often had recourse, we cannot but see that the restraint in which he was held was so manifest, that there was no necessity for calling in the aid of false semblances.

This new outrage confirmed the king in his decision, by flight to regain an independent position ; but to ensure success by lulling the people into false security, he descended to unworthy duplicity. He affected a greater zeal than ever for the Revolution, wrote a letter to his

ambassadors at foreign courts, proclaiming his attachment to the new constitution, disavowing the intention of flying, which was attributed to him, and declaring all those his enemies who should doubt of his being in a state of perfect freedom; but at the same time couching his letter in such terms as to indicate that violence had forced it from him, and empowering his brother, the Comte d'Artois, to seek an interview with the emperor Leopold, who was then at Mantua, to solicit him to concert with the other princes definitive measures to be taken in his favor. In this interview, it was determined that thirty-five thousand Austrians should be marched into Flanders, fifteen thousand into Alsace, while thirty thousand Piedmontese were to move towards Lyons, and twenty thousand Spaniards towards the Pyrenees.

The emperor promised the co-operation of the king of Prussia and the neutrality of England,* and a protestation written in the name of the house of Bourbon was to be signed by the kings of Naples and of Spain, by the infant of Parma, and by the expatriated princes. The greatest secrecy was to be maintained, and the king was recommended to remain perfectly quiet. Louis XVI. at first accepted the convention, and determined upon acting in accordance with it; but there was a schism in the emigrant camp, and when Bretueuil, who belonged to the party which was not acting at Mantua, advised the king's flight, his advice was finally adopted, and Bouillé was apprized that the king had determined upon deferring no longer. The general, in consequence, drew together the troops he could best depend upon in a camp at Montmedy, a place upon the frontiers, where the king had decided to take his stand, and prepared every thing in the best way to secure the safety of the monarch,

* Thiers.

giving, as a pretext for all these preparations, certain movements of the powers without. The 20th of June was fixed as the day of the king's departure. The queen, who always showed much more decision and dignity of character than Louis, had undertaken all the arrangements to be made on the route from Paris to Châlons, while Bouillé was to provide the means of safety from that place to Montmedy. Small detachments of cavalry were, under the pretext of escorting a treasure, to be stationed at short distances from each other on the route, and Bouillé himself was to meet the royal fugitives some distance in advance of Montmedy. The queen had found means of securing a secret egress from the palace, and the royal family were to travel with false passports and under feigned names. The greatest secrecy had been maintained, but by some unknown means a part of the plan must have transpired, as the national guard on service at the palace was doubled. But in spite of this redoubled vigilance, on the 21st June, (the departure had been postponed for one day,) at midnight, the king, the queen, Madame Elizabeth, the king's sister, and Madame de Tourzel, the governess of the royal children, with her pupils, (all in disguise,) succeeded in escaping from the palace unseen.* Madame de Tourzel and the children immediately got into a glass coach, driven by Count Fersen, a young Swedish nobleman, disguised as coachman, and were soon joined by the king and Madame Elizabeth; but the queen, who was accompanied by a *garde du corps*, and was the last who

* The king's two aunts had left the kingdom two months before, but had been arrested at the frontiers until the National Assembly should be apprized of their intention. A great debate ensued, and was only ended by one of the deputies exclaiming that Europe would be astonished to find that the National Assembly of France had deliberated two days upon whether two old women should hear mass at Paris or at Rome.

left the palace, met M. de Lafayette's carriage, escorted by torch-bearers, and, endeavoring to escape notice, lost her way, and did not rejoin her companions until an hour after : an hour spent by them in mortal anxiety. When they were all safe in the carriage Count Fersen got upon the box, but he being also but imperfectly acquainted with the intricacies of Paris, more precious time was lost before they reached the Porte St. Martin and got into the berlin, drawn by six fleet horses, which there awaited them. Madame de Tourzel was supposed to be the mother of the family, under the name of Madame de Korff, and the king her *valet de chambre*. The berlin was preceded by three *gardes du corps* disguised as couriers and servants. During the night the royal fugitives proceeded unimpeded ; and the Comte de Provence, the king's eldest brother, with his consort, in the mean time directed their flight towards Flanders, taking another route in order not to awaken suspicion.

At eight o'clock in the morning, Paris was still ignorant of the king's flight, but soon after the secret transpired and circulated with the rapidity of lightning. Lafayette, though despairing of being able to overtake the fugitives, immediately sent out three aides-de-camp in pursuit of them, taking upon himself the responsibility of the written orders which he gave them, and which were couched in terms as if he believed the king had been carried off by force. This supposition, which assured to the king more respectful treatment, was also adopted by the assembly,* in which the moderate party now had the ascendant. The assembly calmly waited the issue of affairs, while occupied in the measures to be taken in the alarming crisis, but in the sections and the clubs there were uproar and joyful acclamations ;

* Thiers.

all the insignia of royalty were destroyed by them, and their organs, the journals, in their usual coarse and infamous language, congratulated France on "having got rid of an idiotic king, and of a wicked woman, who, to the wantonness of Messalina, joined the bloodthirstiness of the Medicis." "Now is the moment," proclaimed Marat, in his particular newspaper, "now is the moment when the heads of the ministers, of Lafayette, of Bailly, of all the rogues of the municipality, of all the traitors of the assembly ought to fall;" and when we remember the forty-four thousand branch associations of the Jacobin Club, of which these monsters were the mouthpieces, and where their sentiments found ready echo, we may form a conception of the spirit which animated France. The longings of the people of France were expressed in the hideous ravings of Marat, of Camille Desmoulins, of Danton, and whatever were the names of the ranters in the Jacobin and Cordelier Clubs, whose love of their country seemed to inspire them with nothing but a fierce hatred of all those, who, by trying to maintain any kind of order, were of course considered as mortal enemies, by men whose chief aim was disorder.

In the mean time the royal fugitives had proceeded on their way, without, however, meeting the military detachments which had been posted on the route to protect them. The people had expressed so much suspicion and uneasiness at the unexpected presence of them, that they had been obliged to withdraw, in order not to create danger instead of ensuring safety. Already at Châlons, the king, who had the imprudence to be looking out of the carriage window, had been recognised, but the mayor of the place, being fortunately a stanch royalist, had prevented the person who made the discovery from revealing it. At St. Meneshould

fortune was less favorable, the king repeated the imprudence, and was again recognised, and this time by a fierce republican, Drouet, the son of the postmaster of the place. He had not time to have the king arrested on the spot, but hastened on to Varennes, the next station, pursued by a brave soldier who suspected his intention and hoped to detain him. But in vain; Drouet arrived at Varennes before the unhappy fugitives, and having apprized the municipality, instant measures were taken for the legal arrestation of the king. The latter protested for a long while, assuring the authorities that they were mistaken, that he was not the king, but when they insisted, and the dispute was waxing warm, the queen impatiently exclaimed: "Since you recognise him as your king, then treat him at least with due respect."

The king, seeing that further dissimulation was useless, now tried to engage the people present in his favor, and turning to M. Sausse, the functionary who had arrested him, he protested that he had not intended to leave the kingdom, but merely wished to place himself in a position where he could act more independently; then, throwing his arms round Sausse, the unhappy monarch wept, and implored him in touching terms to save his wife and his children; and the queen, taking the dauphin in her arms, joined her prayers to his. Sausse, though moved, remained firm, and entreated the king to return to Paris, but Louis would not hear of this, and insisted on proceeding to Montmedy. At this juncture two cavalry detachments arrived, and the royal family thought themselves saved; but on learning that the king was arrested, the common soldiers declared that they were for the nation, and that they would not be accomplices in his flight. In the mean time the na-

tional guards in the environs had been summoned, and were gathered together in great numbers, and all hope was vain. The night passed in anxious suspense. At six o'clock in the morning Lafayette's aide-de-camp arrived with his order, and the royal travelling-carriage was again turned towards Paris. Bouillé, who had been apprized in the middle of the night of what had happened, had immediately put himself at the head of a regiment of cavalry, and spurred on by the anxiety that devoured him, arrived at Varennes an hour and a half after the royal family's departure, and found the town already prepared to resist his entrance. The bridge over the river that he would have to pass in order to follow the royal family was also thrown down, so that the time that would be lost in overcoming these obstacles, made all hope of overtaking and rescuing the king vain, and Bouillé retired with a heart bleeding for his royal master. He immediately passed the frontiers, and when in security, wrote a letter to the assembly, generously taking upon himself the whole blame of the king's flight, and threatening immediately to attack France at the head of a foreign army, in case any violence was attempted against the king's person.

When the arrest of the king was made known at Paris, the people manifested the greatest delight, and the assembly immediately deputed three of its members to meet the monarch and accompany him to Paris. The commissaries chosen were all of the left side; they were Pétion, Barnave, and Latour-Maubourg. The latter followed in a carriage with Madame de Tourzel, the two former took their seats in the royal carriage, where Pétion seems to have vented his patriotism in basely humiliating the unhappy family, on whose privacy he had forced himself; while Barnave's young

enthusiastic soul, already moved to pity by the sight of fallen grandeur, learned in conversation with the queen and princess Elizabeth, to appreciate their noble characters and elevated minds, and began, as Mirabeau had done before him, to dream of reconciling the king and the constitution. The queen, on her side, was charmed with the courteous politeness and real merit of the young deputy, and from that moment gave him her full esteem and confidence.*

During the journey, which lasted eight days, the revolutionary spirit of the departments was strongly manifested; more than one hundred thousand national guards gathered along the royal route, to serve as escorts, and even the presence of the commissaries of the assembly could not protect the royal family from their insults and abuse. At Paris, where it had been placarded on all the walls, that "whoever applauded the king should be beaten, whoever insulted him should be hanged," they were received by an immense crowd, in threatening silence; and saved by the efforts of Lafayette and his guards from further outrages, they again entered the Tuileries, where, in consequence of a decree of the assembly, declaring that the king was provisionally suspended from his functions, he was for a time guarded like a state-prisoner.

This decree had, however, not passed without violent opposition; two hundred and ninety deputies had protested against it, and had even refused to take part in the debate upon it, in order to render invalid the operations of the assembly, (30th June, 1791.) Barnave and the two Lameths had now entered into regular connection with the court, and Barnave himself drew up the king's answer to the commissaries deputed by the as-

* Madame Campan.

sembly to interrogate him. In this answer the king gave as a reason for his flight, the desire of making himself fully acquainted with public opinion, and proved, by numerous facts, that it was not his intention to leave the kingdom. Otherwise, this document contains a series of downright falsehoods, which being cleverly managed, has obtained for it, from M. Thiers, and other worshippers of the doctrines of expediency, the reputation of a "master-work of cleverness;" but the lovers of truth and true dignity of character, cannot but deplore that Louis XVI., who knew so well how to bear his sufferings, when they did at last come in their most fearful shape, should so often have condescended to unworthy means to help himself out of his difficulties.

Violent discussions took place in the assembly, upon the inviolability of the king's person, and the re-establishment of his authority. The moderate party had still the ascendant; the Jacobins, however, whose principles were represented in the assembly by Robespierre, Pétion, Buzot, and a few others, would not hear of any re-establishment of authority or prerogative, but insisted that the king's flight was equivalent to an abdication, and that the assembly had now to proclaim his having forfeited the throne, and to establish a republic. It was the first time that the word was pronounced in the assembly, though things without, from the very commencement, had a decided tendency towards it, this being one of the phases through which the state had to pass before it reached the complete state of anarchy which must inevitably follow, where the very foundations of the state are shaken, and where the system of levelling had begun as it had in France. Who was there in France to say to the people, "So far shalt thou go and no farther," when the people had learned

that no rights are inviolable, when brute force is predominant. The journals, the districts, the leaders of the clubs, were incessantly crying out, "We will have no more kings!" and the Jacobins resolved to lay upon the "altar of the fatherland," at the Champ de Mars, a petition to this effect, for signatures.

The assembly found itself surpassed, and returned to its monarchical ideas; the party headed by Barnave, Lameth, and Duport, who had hitherto directed the democratic movement, united with the centre; all those who were devoted to the constitution rallied; and though it was easy to foresee what would be the position of the king, replaced upon his tottering throne, without respect, without esteem, and without power, the majority hoped to save the constitution, by saving the royal authority.*

It was decreed that the king should be denied the exercise of the executive power, until the constitution should be completed, and should be presented for his acceptance; that at that period his prerogatives, his constitutional guards, and civil list, should be restored to him; but if he should retract his oath, if he should put himself at the head of foreign armies, or should allow war to be declared in France in his name, he should be considered as having abdicated, should fall into the rank of a simple citizen, and should be liable to be brought to judgment for acts undertaken after this abdication.

The republicans were enraged at this decree, and endeavored to make the people rise; they persisted in signing their petition, though the resolution was now already passed, and formed menacing assemblies at the Champ de Mars, where several persons were massacred, (17th July.) The assembly summoned the municipality,

* Lavallee.

and enjoined it to use all the means prescribed by law to put down the riots, and Bailly and Lafayette, with his national guards, repaired to the scene of action, where six thousand signatures had already been affixed to the petition, and where they were received with insults and abuse. During several hours they tried in vain to appease the mad multitude, and were at last obliged to proclaim martial law ; but their summonses were replied to by hootings and a shower of stones, and a pistol-shot was fired at Lafayette, for now the time was come when the former idols of the people were in their turn to be broken. Lafayette ordered his men to fire, and after several lives were lost, the crowd dispersed, and the republican party were for a time intimidated ; but the national guard soon began to regret having fired upon the people. Bailly and Lafayette were held up to execration, and Barnave, Duport, and Lameth, and all moderate men in the kingdom, were included in the same hatred with which the members of the Feuillans and the emigrants were regarded.

The most disgusting feature in all the ravings to which these continual denunciations gave rise, is the constant introduction of the words liberty and patriotism, in speeches replete with the grossest selfishness, and in which bloodthirstiness and love of rapine are conspicuous in every line. The love of their fellow-citizens, which these men, for whom no hypocrisy was too base, pretended to be the mover of all their actions and all their words, looked very much like the love of the vampire for the body whose blood he hopes to suck.

While things were in this state at Paris, the emigrants, whose hopes had risen with the king's flight, were struck with consternation when Monsieur, his brother, arrived alone at Brussels, and they got tidings

of Louis's arrest. There was now nothing to be expected but from the assistance of foreign powers, who were willing to lend their aid ; for the principles set forth by the French revolution were of a nature to enlist all monarchs against them.

The Emperor, the King of Prussia, and the Comte d'Artois, met at Pilnitz, where they signed a treaty on the 27th of August, which prepared for the invasion of France, and which was followed by a declaration, wherein the sovereigns, considering the case of Louis XVI. as their own, demanded from France, on peril of their declaring war against the country, that the king should be liberated, and replaced on his throne ; that the National Assembly should be dissolved ; and that the princes of the empire having possessions in Alsace, should be re-established in their feudal rights. But this declaration, far from ameliorating the king's position, only still farther exasperated the people against him, and their hatred of their own king extended to all other monarchs, who were denominated tyrants, and were threatened with having their people revolutionized. The assembly prepared for resistance, the frontiers were put in a state of defence, one hundred thousand national guards were levied, and though a great number of the young officers of the line took their dismissal, France was not in need of defenders, for, however divided within, the revolutionary party had but one mind as to resistance to foreign foes.

While occupied with these preparations, the assembly still continued its legislative labors, which were now approaching their termination, and the members who were weary and unsatisfied, and the people who longed for novelty and new excitement, looked forward to this termination with no small degree of satisfaction. It only remained to unite all the constitutional decrees into one

body, in order to present them for the acceptance of the king, and then for the members of the assembly to withdraw, in accordance with the decree of the 1st May, which declared that none of the members of the existing assembly could enter into the next one, or even receive an appointment from the king. In vain had Duport said on that occasion, "Since we are glutted with principles, how is it that we are not advised that stability is also a principle of government? Shall we expose the French nation, whose temper is fickle and headstrong, to a new revolution, every two years, in laws and in opinion?"

It was too late then to speak of stability or common sense; the fiercest passions were roused on all sides, and the assembly bent before them, and left the work for which they had toiled, and which they thought sufficient to reconstitute the nation, to the guardianship of those who, being elected in the heat of the revolutionary movement, could of course only be the representatives of the fiercest passions and the worst feelings of the people. It is the fashion among French historians, to denominate this renunciation of farther part in the government of the state, as imprudent generosity; it is sufficient to point out the folly of such an act, to prove that no motives of generosity (which, in such a case as this, could only arise out of criminal ignorance) can possibly excuse it. Lafayette and Bailly were not behindhand in this rivalry of "generosity," but also resigned their functions, when the labors of the assembly were concluded. The national guard of Paris was then reorganized, and in accordance with the principles of the day, no commander-general was again nominated, but the *chefs de legion* exercised by turns the functions during one month.

When the constitutional decrees were all collected, it

was suggested that they ought to be revised ; but those who feared that alterations might be introduced which they were nowise inclined to accept, protested vehemently against the revision, and the assembly was obliged to content itself by declaring that France had the right of reviewing its constitution, but that it would be prudent not to use that right for thirty years.

The constitutional act, when completed, was presented to the king, who was then restored to liberty, and re-invested with his rights. After a few days' deliberation, the king wrote to the assembly : " I accept the constitution, I pledge myself to defend it from every danger within, and against every attack from without, and to enforce its execution by every means in my power." On the following morning he went in person to the assembly to repeat his acceptation of a constitution which he was not in a position to refuse, and the respect which was henceforth to be paid to the chief of the state, was shown to him, by his chair being placed on an equal line with that of the president, and by the assembly remaining seated while he got up to address them. For thus it had been determined before his arrival, " because the king was only the chief functionary of the state, while they (the deputies) represented the state itself, and the sovereignty of the people." When the president in his turn rose to reply to the king, and observed that the king remained seated, he again sat down, and delivered his speech in this position. The unhappy Louis, when returned to the Tuileries after this fearful trial, sank down upon a chair, and after covering his face with his hands, wept aloud, while the queen, throwing herself upon her knees before him, encircled him with her arms.* But the people without

* Madame Campan.

shouted and exulted, every man feeling himself greater, because a fellow-man who happened to be born to a throne, and to expectations of happiness and glory, had been made to taste the bitter cup of humiliation and human misery.

The period between this day and the 30th September, when the National Assembly dissolved itself, was taken up by fêtes and rejoicings, in which the unhappy sufferers were obliged to play a prominent part. On the 30th, the king again repaired to the assembly, to deliver another hollow speech, and when he had left, one of the deputies, rising, proclaimed with a powerful voice, addressing himself to the people: "The Constituent Assembly declares that its mission is accomplished, and that it terminates at this moment its sittings."

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